

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

SANDERS



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HISTORICAL NOTES

ON
THE LIFE OF CHRIST

BY
PROFESSOR FRANK K. SANDERS, D.D.

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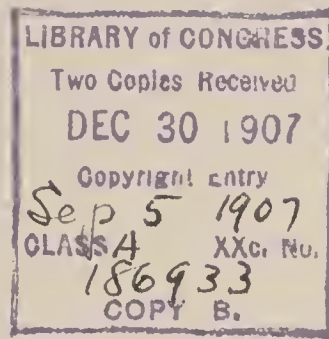
BIBLE STUDY PUBLISHING COMPANY

250 DEVONSHIRE STREET

BOSTON

1907

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PREFACE

These notes were written to accompany the Bible Study Union Biographical lessons on the Life of Christ. They were originally published in various weekly papers, and were found so valuable as to warrant their issue in book form for permanent use.

The notes follow the lessons, chapter by chapter, but present an interpretation of the life of Christ rather than an account of its details. They trace its progress, placing its principal incidents and teachings in their proper historical environment and showing their meaning. This enables the reader to win a true historical perspective, and thus to understand each lesson in the light of its relation to Christ's life as a whole as well as for its own special teachings. The notes also suggest the practical applications of the lessons to the life of to-day.

Dr. Sanders' high reputation as a Biblical scholar is a sufficient guarantee that teachers and pupils alike will find these notes of great aid toward the correct understanding and best use of the Gospel narrative.

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Chapter 1.—The Historic Preparation for the Coming of Christ. Lu. 1: 5-25, 57-80.

The life of Jesus of Nazareth can never be adequately set forth by one interpreter. So many-sided is its contact with the life and thought of all ages, and so profound its significance, that it outreaches the comprehension of any one mind. As the first century after Christ required no less than four Gospels in order that every type of mind might find in Him the revealer of God to men, so the present age, with its bewildering variety of attainment and need, welcomes repeated attempts to exhibit to it the living Christ of history and of experience. Each one emphasizes some permanent aspect of His life, some vital contact with His masterful personality, some uplift for the present day.

These chapters are written from the point of view of the teacher, who desires to interpret helpfully the life of Jesus. They will aim to create a proper historical perspective, doing justice to the environment which both helped and thwarted His work; to emphasize, as they occur, the data of real significance; to assist in their proper classification and ordered development; to stimulate, as far as feasible, the constructive imagination of each reader so that he will reproduce for himself each scene; and to hint at the life-values so prodigally suggested by the words and deeds of the Master.

The personality of Jesus as unfolded in the Gospels is that of a master of men, keen of insight, ready in sympathy, bold in resourceful leadership. He was likewise a prophet who reinterpreted the ideals of the past in fresh and living forms, a law-giver who reformulated the working standards of every-day religious life, a

teacher who simplified and made more real the relationship of God with men, a character which embodied the Divine in human form. Unique as He was, however, He was indebted to the past. He did His work at a time when the world had been made ready to hear His message and to spread it abroad.

The story of the preparation of the world for the work of Jesus reaches back as far as history itself. It is the story of the gradual growth of an adequate consciousness of God. This process did not begin with the origin of the Hebrew people. There was a long religious heritage before their day, which endowed them with religious sensitiveness and power of apprehension. God was a great reality to every true Hebrew, an important factor in His universe. It became, therefore, possible, in the course of centuries of varying but broadening experience, for the nation, through its prophetic thinkers, to formulate a working conception of God, man, the universe, and their mutual relations, far in advance of that held by any other people, and thus to become fitted to give religious instruction to an eager world.

What the Hebrews regarded as their supreme misfortune enabled them to achieve this sublime commission. Before they could teach the world the things of God they needed unification, compact organization, a classifying and reducing to system of their distinctive ideas, and a high level of intelligence. The Babylonian exile opened the way to these achievements. It resulted, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, in the establishment of Judaism, with its ritual, its synagogue and its strenuous religious partisanship. Judaism put a premium upon intelligence and loyalty. Its standards, ideals and methods tended to uniformity. The Jew had but one message regarding God, but it was adequate.

The long-continued dominance of foreign nations over the Jewish race resulted in its wide dispersion over the commercial world. In time no important city lacked its Jewish colony, a hive of enterprise, a center of wealth, respected as a community with definite re-

ligious convictions. The Jews made a marked impression upon the decadent paganism of their day and thus aided in important fashion the surrender of the older superstitions to the attack of Christianity.

After Alexander's conquest of Asia Judaism met a new and formidable foe. Hellenism was adaptable, aggressive and essentially selfish. It glorified humanity, whereas Judaism exalted God. Neither afforded by itself a permanent philosophy of life. Each gained by impact upon the other. Judaism's heroic struggle under her Maccabean leaders against the kings who sought to Hellenize her people resulted in more than independence. It established her loyalty to the past, her confidence in the future, her consciousness of power, her self-satisfaction. It insured the continuance of her historic development.

More than half a century before the birth of Jesus the famous general Pompey placed the last Hasmonean king under the "protection" of Rome, which meant a gradual assumption of Roman sovereignty. Galling as this yoke became to the patriotic and ambitious race, it was of inestimable significance for them, multiplying many times their effectiveness. Rome stood for peace and order, for safe and speedy transportation, for the growing unity of the world. Rome's capacity for administration promoted the rapid spread of the language and culture of the Greeks, thereby awakening decadent peoples to new life and fresh enterprise. The subjection of the Jewish people was, therefore, a mere incident in their attainment of a broader opportunity for impressing the world.

Whatever its defects, Judaism was a great religious brotherhood. The Psalms and other writings of its day breathe a deeply religious spirit. By it was fostered many a strong and devout personality. The parents of John, Zacharias and Elisabeth, were typical of a large and important, although unobtrusive, section of the people, whose spiritual life was fed by the Judaism of their experience, who were truly ready for Jesus and His mes-

sage, who supplied His contingent of eager disciples. Such as they were capable of visions—of an Israel, obedient and holy, of a Messiah whose leadership would enable Israel to do its anticipated work. With them the joy of parenthood was lost in the privilege of guardianship. With zeal and tenderness they brought up their son to be “God’s man.” No wonder that he “waxed strong in spirit,” developing early a comprehension of the task which was to be his, and the sturdy independence which made him adequate to its responsibilities.



Hebron.

Supposed to have been the home of John the Baptist.

The forerunner of Jesus was the child of centuries, the living expression of the age-long development through the Jewish people of the unchanging Divine purpose. Generations participated in this movement without realizing the significance of their work; nations opposed it only to increase its power. It did not come to a close with the births of John and Jesus, but was only accelerated. The men and women of to-day, willing or reluctant alike, are also participants. The kingdom of God is to come in all its fulness. To-day as never before we can realize that all history has been preparing for it and can be assured of its consummation in God’s own time. The supreme value of our own lives, however humble or great they may seem to be, is in their relation to this world movement.

Chapter 2.—“A Saviour Who Is Christ, the Lord.”

Mt. 1:18-25; Lu. 1:26-56; 2:1-20; Jo. 1:1-18.

The birth of Jesus came, indeed, at the very “fulness of time.” It was at a turning point of history. The energies of many ancient empires had spent themselves; Greece had exchanged her spear and helmet for the merchant’s staff and the robe of the scholar. Rome’s lust for conquest had been sated, so that her ambition could be roused by the thought of wisely administering the world she had subdued. Wherever conditions made clemency possible her dependencies were allowed large freedom of life. The mighty emperor, Augustus, was too firmly seated on his throne to be suspicious in petty ways.

Thus the Palestine of the days of Jesus was singularly well fitted to be the starting-point of a world movement. To that world, as Smith so well remarks, “its every port, on sea or desert, was, at that time, an open gateway.” The Jewish people had become a spiritually intelligent and responsive working unit, capable of producing those who under proper leadership were ready to do heroic and holy deeds, and able to comprehend, explain and proclaim Divine ideals of life. While Judaism made a little, self-satisfied world of its own, it was also in immediate contact with the world without. Jerusalem was a true world-center to which Jews from all nations came on pilgrimage. Many of her citizens were merchant princes who had connections with distant lands. Moreover Herod the Great, who sat on the throne when Jesus was born, was an alien by blood, a sworn vassal of Rome and a devotee of Hellenic culture. He made welcome to his realm the clever, the resourceful, the enterprising and the artistic of every nationality. Soldiers, merchants, travelers, scholars, even immigrants of another race, were no unusual sight in his kingdom. No country in the world could have served so well as the scene of the Messiah’s rapidly unfolding ministry.

The very reason which Luke gives for the birth of Jesus in the city of Bethlehem exhibits the freedom



**Bethlehem, Showing the Castle-like Church of the Nativity
on the Left.**

From a photograph.

which Augustus permitted to a nation which obeyed his will. By a decree he called for a general census. No doubt the enrolment was distasteful to his Jewish subjects. He insisted on the measure, but allowed it to be executed in a distinctively Jewish way. As far as possible each Jew was registered at his ancestral home. It was not essential that Mary should go to Bethlehem, but her natural desire that her son should be recognized as of David's line was perhaps sufficient to account for her presence.

That Jesus was of David's descent does not seem to have been disputed in His generation. His spiritual heirship was, however, of greater moment to the open-minded Jews than that He was David's son in the flesh. His personality rather than His pedigree must have determined men's convictions. They saw that He fulfilled the Messianic ideal and hailed Him as David's son. To show that His descent could be regularly traced from David in more than one way was an afterthought.

In the beautiful stories gathering around the birth of Jesus the first and third Gospels enable us to realize in part the home that welcomed Him. Its central figure is His mother, Mary. Through all the stages of wonder, shrinking, submission to the will of God, comprehension of the exalted privilege conferred upon her,

exultant gratitude, deliberate adjustment for the future, meditative devotion to her Child and a touch of awe regarding His destiny, the narratives convey an impression of a strong and deep yet womanly nature. Gentle, trustful and pure, she was also resolute, thoughtful and self-controlled, able to wait on God's own time.

Joseph stands more in the background, but not from lack of individuality. Under the keenest of trials he remained generous, considerate and honorable; made fully aware of the duty laid upon him by God, he was heroically ready. He was worthy to become the guardian of the Holy Child.

There is a note of exultant joy in the matchless story of the birth which has been sounding ever since that blessed night. Many there were beside the shepherds who had been awaiting with ill-concealed eagerness the gracious visitation of God for the consolation of Israel. An earthly as well as a heavenly host was ready to hail the advent of a Prince of Peace, through whom God's good pleasure would become manifest to men.

What each Gospel seeks to make clear is that a great spiritual event took place that night of supreme significance for humanity. It was not merely Jesus the man who was born, but Jesus the Saviour of men, He who was "of the seed of David according to the flesh," but was also "the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness." The fourth Gospel in its elaborate prologue makes this no clearer than the others. He was the living revelation of God because He was the only begotten of the Father, heralded by Divine messengers and guarded by heavenly hosts.

The conviction of the men and women of to-day that Jesus was more than a human being like ourselves rests, like that of the first generation of Christians, on the gradual unfolding of His divinity through His life. Neither Jesus Himself nor His opponents nor His apostles laid any stress upon the facts of His birth. The apostles preached about His death and resurrection and then narrated the achievements of His active life.

These were the proofs which appealed to the hearts of men and insured their allegiance to Jesus as their Lord.

One who thoughtfully studies the life of Jesus must take into account at the very outset His divine nature. It is the clue which explains the mystery of His personality and His power. Without these stories of the Divine watchfulness at His birth the record would seem incomplete. The leaders of the early church took the divinity of Jesus for granted. Nowhere do we find the significance of it more adequately stated than by the apostle Paul, in the sixties, while he was in prison at Rome. In Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians he declares in words which have satisfied the hearts of devoted men and women of every age the supremacy, redemptive power and sacrificial love of Christ.

The significance of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, sent into the world for its redemption, is very great. God was first fully understood through His Son. His life brought the Divine nature within man's reach. It has made religion a life of active co-operation with God. But the thought that Jesus was more than a human personality goes deeper. He becomes a Saviour who invites our confidence and our allegiance because He is divine and through Him we have contact with a complete experience and with a perfect expression of it in forms of life.

Chapter 3.—The Growth of Jesus to Maturity.

Mt. 2:1-23; Lu. 2:21-52.

It is a rather remarkable fact that the Gospels have so little to say regarding the first thirty years of the life of Jesus. A legitimate curiosity might seek to know more of His gradual attainment of that confident maturity of conviction and purpose which He exhibited from the beginning of His ministry. This meagreness of tradition may have been due to the reserve of the writers who would use only well-tested material or to the paucity of available information when the Gospels were completed. The narrative of Luke doubtless reflects the best traditions. There are peculiarities of style which indicate that he derived some of his information from written or oral Aramaic sources. It is not improbable that Mary was his informant, at least in part, and that he carefully sifted the data laid before him, preserving that alone which had significance. That much traditional material of an inferior sort was in circulation the Apocryphal gospels would seem to indicate.

The data preserved to us continue that strange impression of supernaturalness and naturalness combined already noted in the narrative of His birth. The infant Jesus is taken to the temple for presentation and redemption precisely as any other boy would be taken, but there the aged Simeon and Anna recognize Him and declare His mission.

In the first Gospel is the narrative which links the child Jesus with the most crafty and cruel nature that ever misused power. Herod the Great was suspicious, cunning, proud of his royal state and loth to yield it even to his lawful heirs. What wonder that the queries of the Magi filled him with fear and rage! The resultant massacre of the innocent babes of Bethlehem was but a trifle to such a madman as he, one who, on mere suspicion, could order his own family to shameful death.

This monster of wickedness, yet master of the art of

ruling Jewry, one who had done much administratively for his kingdom, reducing it to order and introducing culture, came to his unlamented death some few years after the birth of Jesus. He bequeathed Judea, Samaria and Edom to his eldest son Archelaus, Galilee and Perea to Antipas, and the northeastern district to Philip. Archelaus was a stupid brute. After ten troubled years he was, A. D. 6, superseded by a Roman procurator, nominally subordinate to the Syrian legate. These rulers, quite unaccustomed to Jewish ideas and habits, disdainful of all but Romans, and entrusted with large powers, did much to strain the relations between Rome and her Jewish subjects. The latter actually had much freedom, the Sanhedrin and the local councils exercising important administrative and judicial functions, yet their discontent increased steadily. Pilate, who began his official career about 26 A. D., was in constant conflict with the people.

The greater portion of the growth of Jesus to maturity was spent in Galilee under the sovereignty of Herod Antipas. For this monarch he once expressed a sovereign contempt. Antipas was thoroughly selfish in his ambitions and his acts. He was at heart a pagan, and entirely out of touch with the real currents of thought in his dominion. He did not, however, interfere with them. The Galileans, less fanatical than their brethren of Judea, were equally patriotic. Living among them, Jesus presumably would have been aware of the active ambitions of His race and of the direction of their hopes.

Nazareth was in many respects an ideal place for His boyhood home. While sheltered and protected by its position as a village in a hollow, from hills close at hand one can see, as Smith remarks, "a map of Old Testament history," and a panorama of the passing life. The inspiration of the past and the stimulus of the present and future was ready to the hand and heart of a thoughtful lad, whose youth and young manhood were passed at Nazareth. It was no secluded or obscure

place, but merely a well-protected one. In close touch with the crowded routes of trade and war and social life, it revealed the rich, full life of the day.

**Nazareth.**

From a photograph.

The poverty of the household of Joseph may fairly be inferred from the simple gift which Mary was able to bring to the temple at the presentation or redemption of her first-born son. Its religious atmosphere and the carefulness to meet with hearty completeness all religious obligations and opportunities may be equally deduced from their scrupulous fulfilment of every ceremonial detail, from the insight into Mary's richly imaginative religious mind which we gain in the Magnificat and for the regularity of their annual visit to Jerusalem at the passover season.

We may be sure that Jesus went through the natural round of training recognized as befitting a Jewish lad. We may be also certain that He entered into this with a glad enthusiasm, a ready comprehension, a maturity of sympathy which astonished those who dealt with Him. The wonder of the venerable doctors at Jerusalem at His understanding of the deeper meaning of the Law could not have been an isolated event. We may fairly infer from the quotations and references preserved in the meagre record of His utterances that He loved to study the book of Deuteronomy and the words of the prophets and psalmists. He could penetrate to their deepest meaning. The dry and superficial comments of the average rabbi of His day must very

early have seemed to Him a mockery of the real spiritual and eternal message of these men of God. To Him these words were still words of truth and power, the very words of God, whereas He came increasingly to realize that the current Rabbinical teachings, supposed to be the legitimate interpretation into practical form of the words of God, were in fact the merest and most threadbare human distortions of it.

The story of His visit to the temple, when he wondered that His parents should be surprised that He took advantage of the great opportunity given Him to make progress in the study of His Heavenly Father's will, exhibits His engrossing spirituality. He had come to thrill with the great thought that to the Jew had been committed God's affairs, and that the highest duty and privilege of any Jew was to become wise with regard to them and to assume the leadership God should open. How much beyond this He had gotten it is impossible to declare. The unique fact of His life was His absolute openness to the best impressions. He was ready as no one else has ever been to make the fullest use of Divine suggestion and direction.

Side by side with the thought of the divinity of Jesus we need the conviction of His complete humanity. His growth was normal, His wisdom gained by experience, His life entirely devoid of spectacular features. But His human nature was fully utilized. No clogs, no hidden faults, no morbid fancies blinded His vision or dwarfed His will. He exhibited a full-formed human life.

There is tremendous significance for every-day men and women in this fact. Not only did this round of experience put Him into real and vital fellowship with all who have earnest lives to live, but He exhibited the power and the promise and the perfection of an unhampered experience. He put first things first. He gave the things of God the right of way. Thus He revealed the significance of a fulness of religious experience, of a real and complete consecration.

Chapter 4.—John's Preaching of Repentance.

Mt. 3:1-12; Lu. 3:1-18.

The first step taken, to all outward seeming, in specific preparation for the Messianic work of Jesus was the appearance of John the Baptist as a preacher of repentance and righteousness of life. Luke alone has preserved for us any hint of His development. "The child waxed strong in spirit and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Like Jesus, John gave up his life to religious demands, but unlike the one who was to be his Master, he brooded in solitude over the work he was to do. The Essenes had communities in the wilderness of Judea, but it is doubtful whether Luke's remark indicates that John was one of them. He was a prophet with an Elijah's instinct for loneliness and individuality. That he was in the deserts does not certainly mean more than that as he grew to maturity he absented himself more and more from the active life of his home and country, and persistently sought the solitude for communion with God. It was a part of the Hebrew creed to honor such a withdrawal. They believed that God would take fruitful possession of such a solitary soul and reveal through it His immediate will.

Thus slowly matured a rich though rugged personality, not original in its thinking, but, rather, faithful, keen, masterful through deep conviction, a true leader of men at a time of crisis, but not one who by his constructive and statesmanlike vision could remain permanently as the guide of their later development. Himself a prophet in heart, John fed in solitude on the grand teachings of the prophets which he interpreted with religious insight and yet as one of them.

No evangelist gives us a clue to the specific reason for John's appearance. Doubtless the spirit of God stirred within him, as in the prophets of old, an irresistible sense of responsibility for the delivery of a needed message to his fellowmen. It was a Divine and not a

human impulse. Without knowing when the expected Messiah was to make His appearance, he became convinced that it was time for people to prepare for His coming and began his impassioned ministry of repentance.

John first appeared at the edge of the wilderness which had become his home, strikingly suggesting in his dress and evident asceticism the stern prophet of Israel who was in many respects his model. Here, near the river Jordan, the people of Jerusalem and Judea



The River Jordan, near Jericho.

From a photograph.

flocked to hear him. It is indicative of the freedom then accorded to the Jewish people by the Roman overlords that so suspicious and watchful a procurator as Pilate should have passed by without question a popular movement of this kind. Twenty or thirty years later it might not have been allowed.

Much had been happening during the preceding decades to bring the Messianic hopes of the people of Judea to fever heat. The hated dominion of Rome was made more conspicuous by the continual presence of soldiers at the holy city. The foolish determination of one or two procurators to carry to an extreme their power by insisting on measures which seemed blasphemous to a reverent and scrupulous Jew, enforced and sustained only by bloody battles, had made the degradation of the people more apparent than ever. Under such circumstances any appeal to the popular expecta-

tion of the Messiah, whom all thought would be a deliverer, was sure to arouse instant enthusiasm.

Just what entered into the conception of a Messiah among the best and most representative minds of the Jewish people it is hard to say. The popular conception was not unnaturally a very material one. The plain, average Jew wanted a king who would put himself at the head of the nation, destroy its enemies and inaugurate a world kingdom of which the Jews should be the unquestioned masters. The doctors of the law were not, as a class, much in advance of this interpretation. The minds of the majority of them were full of the thought that spiritual opportunity would be reached through political dominance. They dwelt upon the assured glory of the Messiah and viewed it as a temporal manifestation. Those who really came nearest to anticipating the teaching of Jesus were the honest, brave and simple souls for whom Judaism had a spiritual message, who mourned the hardness, the sinfulness and the irreligion of the day, who felt that God did not bless His people because they did not let Him do so. Such realized that the supreme need of the nation was a revival of Godlikeness. They read in the prophets repeated promises of the universality of faith in Jehovah through Israel's service. They placed the emphasis on this religious aim rather than upon the political method.

With such the prophet John was in full accord. His religious heritage was such as to develop in him a sympathy with such interpretations. He did not concern himself with God's method of giving the world religious unity. He only knew that it was to be brought about through Israel, God's chosen servant, made up from those who were genuinely consecrated to God's service. So his message was that of separation from evil ways, of immediate repentance, of a life committed to deeds of righteousness, of deliberate self-consecration as evinced by baptism, and of earnest expectancy of the One that should come.

So forceful, fearless and apt were his words that men began to query whether John was not himself the expected One. Perceiving their thoughts John humbly declared his function to be that of a herald. He could call men to repentance, but the Messiah alone could determine their fate. Some he would accept and fill with the spirit of God; others he would count unworthy and give them over to destruction. It was time for men to be thoughtful and to get ready for the judgment that would surely come.

John's preaching was clearly an indispensable preliminary to the work of Jesus. He not only gave the people an attitude of expectancy, but turned their thoughts in right directions. He made them realize their unworthiness to receive the Messiah and awakened a desire to repent and become true children of the covenant. He was not a Jesus, and he did not think he was. He was content to be His forerunner.

John's preaching has a continual value for all time. He went to the heart of the matter. God's working force is always made up from those who have become fitted to enter with sympathy into His plans. Our Messiah is an unfettered and exalted Lord. Our everyday ideal is to enter into personal relation with Him. We shall accomplish this only by doing as John urged his disciples to do on Jordan's banks, by repentance, reconsecration and the living of genuinely righteous lives.

Chapter 5.—The Consecration and Adjustment of Jesus to His Work.

Mt. 3:13—4:11; Lu. 3:21, 22; 4:1-13.

Such preaching as that of John affected with varying results a rapidly widening circle of hearers. It was not long before people were discussing his mission and message throughout the land. Those who were merely curious to see a notable personage were soon satisfied. Many were thrilled with patriotic zeal and longed to join a leader for the anticipated struggle with Rome. The devout and noble souls, who were capable of accepting the moral and religious ideals which John sought to emphasize were stirred by his words to consecration and an eager awaiting of a Messianic reformer. To Jesus Himself in His village home the news that John was publicly proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand came like a trumpet call. He desired at once to number Himself with those who were ready to respond to the summons of God through His prophet. He may have been conscious already that He was to be the chosen of God; He was at any rate conscious of being able to render strong service to men in God's name. The long years at Nazareth, years of unremitting reflection over God's revelation of Himself in the Scriptures, in history and in life, had been fruitful. With an enthusiasm born of self-mastery and of a rare comprehension of the possibilities of the future, Jesus turned His steps toward the Jordan.

As the Baptist himself declared, the baptismal consecration of Jesus was but a form. He revealed at a glance and in every action the exquisite purity, the complete devotedness, the holy sincerity of His nature. He was already, to all outward seeming, a truly consecrated soul. John hesitated to administer the rite, but Jesus desired it that He might "fulfil all righteousness." He felt it incumbent on Himself, no less than on His fellow men, to openly consecrate His powers to God's service.

The moment of entire self-yielding to the will of God was likewise the moment of acceptance and assurance. The account in the Gospel of Luke implies that John and Jesus were alone. The rite had been administered. Jesus was absorbed in prayer. Suddenly in some way, by natural or spiritual vision, each beheld the token of the gift of the Divine Spirit to Jesus for His work, and Jesus received the assurance of Divine approval and a commission for service. The prophet was convinced that Jesus was the successor for whom he had been preparing: Jesus was given a distinctive call to Messianic work.

No wonder that He went away immediately into solitude. His purpose must have been, in part, to think out His future course of action. He was no novice. He had long since arrived at definite conclusions regarding His countrymen, the popular religion and the needs of the hour. He must have realized the wide difference between current ideas and opinions and those which He accepted. He needed to fix upon definite principles of action and a clear-cut program, to realize the new sense of inward power, to adjust it practically to His working life, and to determine its use in the furtherance of His great purpose.

The desolate region to which He betook Himself was not far away. One could pass quickly from the abodes of men to the haunts of the wild beasts. The wilderness of Judea was ever the ready refuge of those who wished for solitude, whether as fugitives from justice or to hold undisturbed communion with God.

Here, alone, Jesus thought through the problem which crowded upon His active understanding. When He returned to the Jordan He had reached conclusions from which He did not thereafter essentially depart. The struggles of those days He has handed down through His disciples in the stories of temptation, representing experiences terribly real yet doubtless spiritual. Reducing their results to the rules of action to which they led, Jesus came to three deliberate de-

cisions. In the first place, He would not use His miraculous power for the relief of ordinary human needs, exempting Himself and His friends from the experiences of other men. Both He and His disciples bought their



The Mount of Temptation.

Mons Quarantania.

From a photograph.

food or went hungry. Nor, again, would He use it to create enthusiasm for Himself by exhibiting His mastery of desperate situations. He was not to be a worker of such "signs" as the people desired and even demanded. Finally, He would not establish the kingdom of God in the world by the sacrifice of conscience, pandering to popular prejudice and conciliating the Pharisees, whom He believed to be leading the people astray.

It is worth while to note the representative character of these experiences. They assailed Jesus from all points of view; physical and spiritual, personal and material. When they were completed He had run the gamut of experience and had become equipped for every trial. These tests were keen and subtle. They searched every joint in His armor. Only a sound, guileless, sincere, truthful, strong and resolute nature could have withstood them. But Jesus did remain steadfast. Having thought His future policy through to the end, having counted every form of cost, He determined upon a course of action which would fully accord with the will of God, and from this He never swerved. He constantly, as we shall see, adapted His working methods to the

existing situation, but His principles and His purposes did not alter. With His final rejection of the last subtle suggestion of evil, He was fully clothed in the power of the Spirit.

He who is to do great things for God, assuming in His name a leadership of men or purposing a steady loyalty to the ideals and opportunities of the average life, will follow gladly the example of the Master. Secret loyalty is at best a refined kind of selfishness. It is better for him and better for the world he is to influence to be outspoken. The one who definitely and publicly consecrates himself to the service of God not only enlists the upbuilding energy of God on his behalf, but multiplies his natural opportunities for Christian helpfulness. Jesus had really given His whole being to God long before His visit to the Jordan; but He valued the opportunity to take His place among men as one of those who are glad to stand up and be counted among the active agents of righteousness.

Not even men and women of undoubted consecration can avoid temptation. It comes to all, as it came to Jesus, in the opportunity to use good gifts or ample resources in purely selfish ways, to employ unworthy means to gain great ends, to use illegal short-cuts to desirable achievements. No one can avoid having such temptations, but any one can resist them. "We cannot prevent the birds hovering around our heads, but we need not permit them to build their nests there." Like Jesus those who are pressed by the tempter can best employ the weapons of the Spirit. These are sharpest and most reliable. They who put on the armor of God find themselves more and more able to stand.

Chapter 6.—His First Followers : The Dawning of Their Faith.

Jo. 1 : 19—2 : 12.

With the exception of the four memorable days which followed the gathering of Jesus and His disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem, it is difficult to think of four days of greater moment than those which immediately succeeded the return of Jesus from the desert to the river Jordan. He knew by this time what He hoped to accomplish, but He was all alone. He had parted company with His old life and its associations. He had no one to stand with Him and keep Him in touch with the world about. It is not unreasonable to suppose that as He returned to the Jordan it was with the thought that among the multitudes who were listening to John there might be a few who were prepared to make common cause with Him in a campaign for the kingdom of heaven.

The disciples of John the Baptist were already becoming classified. His declarations had varying effects. To the deputation from the Sanhedrin, sent to determine his status, he disavowed all other standing than that of a prophetic forerunner of a far superior personality, whose mission and power were such as to justify John in summoning all men to prepare by repentance and holy living for His coming. To the thronging multitudes the Baptist dwelt upon the personal fruitage of true repentance, generosity, square dealing, fair-mindedness,—and affirmed that the expected One would search out and sweep away the impenitent and indifferent.

Such words quickly classified his hearers. Many found his teaching unendurable. Those who accepted it and stayed close to John were the very sort for whom Jesus was looking. They, on their part, were looking for such a one as He.

To men of this stamp John's welcome of Jesus, when He reappeared, was a revelation. He identified Jesus as the One of whom he had been speaking, declaring

that God Himself had given him this assurance. With an insight none the less real because it seems to have been temporary, he calls Jesus the "Lamb of God," the Redeemer of humanity.

There must have been something in the personality of Jesus which appealed to the Baptist—an unmistakable holiness, serenity and strength. This is what Luke meant by saying that he was "in the power of the Spirit." Such an influence is ever silently exerted by a wholly unselfish, Christlike nature.

On the next day the Baptist with two of his intimate disciples saw Jesus again and repeated his testimony. This time it had all the force of a command. Convinced that his associates were fitted to become the helpful followers of Jesus, John voluntarily gave them up. No greater testimony could be given to the large-heartedness and nobility of the rude prophet.

With some hesitancy the two left John and followed Jesus. Could one so great, they wondered, accept their service? His winning invitation set their minds at rest. They gladly followed Him to His abode, where the three sat together in friendly intercourse. Their theme we can only conjecture. Doubtless Jesus gave expression to His enthusiastic hopes for the kingdom and its appeal to earnest men. His words went home, since the two were amenable to them. The Pharisees or their strict disciples would have been unmoved, because they were not anticipating such a leader as Jesus, nor holding to the principles which He laid down.

That interview convinced the two disciples that they had found a master of men, who exhibited the truest qualities of leadership and appealed to all that was finest and noblest in themselves. His wisdom, insight, sincerity and Godlikeness stirred their souls. They found themselves approving the verdict of the Baptist that Jesus was indeed the awaited Messiah.

So precious a conclusion could not be kept to themselves. The two became three and probably four, since one auditor, at least, and very likely the other also, lost

no time in finding his brother and bringing him to Jesus. Re-enforced the next day by Philip who, in turn, found Nathanael, each one was received by Jesus with gracious favor and given a token of deep insight which invited his trust. Thus the little band was soon knit together by ties of friendship, confidence and wonder. Jesus was beyond their ken, yet they yielded an allegiance to Him.

These were men who revealed a fine working individuality. In the first hours of companionship were evident the unselfish enthusiasm of Andrew, the rugged reliability of Peter, the open-mindedness of Philip, and the honest reserve of Nathanael. Each was a true disciple, but took his own way of reaching and expressing fealty.

A wedding among the circle of relatives or intimate family friends gave Jesus an incidental opportunity to indicate His conception of the range and character of His ministry to men and so exhibit His power that His new followers were convinced that the incident was a true Messianic "sign." Jesus refused to produce "signs" to order, but He did not hinder His disciples and friends from perceiving in some word or act the significance of a "sign."

Mary, accompanied no doubt by the other members of the Nazareth family, had already gone to Cana. Thither Jesus came on His way from the Jordan to Capernaum. With Oriental hospitality the whole band was made welcome at the wedding feast, although probably unexpected. So large an addition to the guests of a humble household brought embarrassment to the host. Jesus was in a measure responsible. It is interesting to note the confidence with which Mary turned to Jesus, who had for so many years been her mainstay. The narrative does not imply that she expected a miracle, but she certainly appealed to His resourcefulness. His reply was not lacking in deference, but conveyed gentle self-assertion, as much as if to say that His sphere and hers were henceforth apart, His interest wider than that

of the family. But Mary knew that He would do something, and directed the servants to follow His bidding.

The disciples, made aware of the embarrassment and of its relief, were impressed by this manifestation of the power of Jesus. To them it was a "sign," a token of His glory, a basis for reverence and faith. Their genuine, indestructible faith of Apostolic days was as yet in the germ. All they had at this time was a sense of power manifested in friendliness, but this was sufficient to transform confidence and friendship into a rudimental, uncomprehending faith.

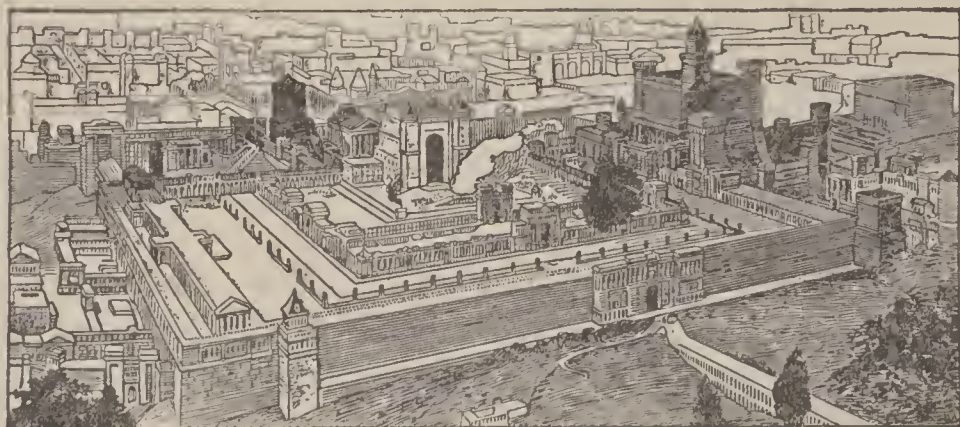
The conditions of genuine faith are never mechanical, nor can conviction be forced. The awakening of the faith of John the Baptist and of the group of disciples was due primarily to their readiness to believe. They were looking for a spiritual leader. Many others saw Jesus just as frequently, but were not led to faith, since they were not in a responsive mood. The disciples did not need to know much about Him in advance. Most of them, John included, were puzzled for a long time over His ideas and methods, but they were responsive to what they did see and could understand. They became sure that Jesus was one of whom God had taken possession, whose wisdom and spiritual power were far in advance of their own, and they gladly followed Him.

Such receptiveness of temper is the first step toward thorough-going faith. It minimizes difficulties and multiplies points of contact. It creates a sympathy which is necessary to true insight. Real faith is the result of a process which begins with interest, and continues toward appreciation and loyalty.

Chapter 7.—Jesus' Self-presentation at Jerusalem to Leaders and People.

Jo. 2:13—3:15.

As a home, or as a point of departure for evangelism, Capernaum was an ideal choice on the part of Jesus. It was a centrally located, cosmopolitan, important city. Had the early ministry of Jesus been of an experimental and tentative character Capernaum would have made an advantageous starting-point. Since he rather began, as the Gospels seem to indicate, with an adequate grasp of religious conditions and a matured plan of procedure, it was antecedently probable that He would present Himself with His appeal in the first place at Jerusalem, the headquarters of Judaism. He was eager to win the loyalty of the "house of Israel" and to direct its children toward a ministry for the world.

**Ancient Jerusalem, from the Mount of Olives.**

From Selous' picture of Jerusalem in its Grandeur.

The pre-eminence of Jerusalem and its doctors of the law in the religious life of the Palestine of that day does not admit of overstatement. The temple, the Sanhedrin, and Judaism's most representative men were there. Among these leaders were many whose undoubted piety, learning and experience earned for them great influence. There were many like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea and Gamaliel who deserved the respect in which they were held.

A line of sharp cleavage ran through the religious leaders of the day. They belonged to two great parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees stood for ungrudging and absolute obedience to the whole law as interpreted by their recognized authorities. Their idea of obedience was often puerile. In their anxiety to keep the actual law they overdid their duty. They turned everyday life into a religious treadmill. Yet they possessed and exhibited the religious temper and impressed people with their seriousness. Consequently they had great influence over the masses. The Sadducees were fewer in number and less able to move public opinion. They were recruited in the main from the priestly class, and were influential because of their control of the temple revenues and privileges and their political power. The representative men of each sect were to be found at Jerusalem.

Jesus chose for His first demonstration a passover season, a time when all of the leaders and multitudes of the people were sure to be in the holy city. Vast crowds came from all parts of the land and "from every nation under heaven," intent on worship and ready for a prophetic word.

It is disappointing that the fourth Gospel—one in which merely narrative details are subordinated—is the only witness to this interesting and important sojourn of Jesus. It relates only a typical detail or two, conveying no clear-cut picture of the work of Jesus. From hints in the other Gospels it may be inferred that Jesus was well known near Jerusalem, but they do not explain how He became so. Their silence does not discredit the testimony of the fourth Gospel, but leaves it rather vague.

To Jerusalem Jesus and His friends came for the great festival. Conscious of an inspiring message and an exalted mission, of divine support and of power not wholly untried, He faced the abuses of the temple enclosure in a new mood. During the many visits since His boyhood He must have realized the scandalous and secularizing customs which had become institutional.

The house of God had become a market place. Stalls of money-changers and pens of animals for sacrifice occupied the open spaces. He now felt a responsibility. As a teacher of God's will to men, it was fitting that He should begin by cleansing the sanctuary and asserting its true character and purpose. That the moral sense of the people approved His summary action the sequel showed. The Sadducean priests with whose profits He had interfered did not venture to do Him harm or to deny the rightness of His act. They simply demanded His authority for acting without permission from the leaders. His enigmatical reply neither they nor His disciples understood at the time, although it was never forgotten. The rulers regarded it as an idle challenge which Jesus knew could not be put to the proof, a boastful assertion of power. But He really declared that, do as they would to the temple and all that it signified, He could speedily re-establish a true place of approach to God for men.

The Gospel narrative implies that Jesus wrought other significant deeds than this one and met with a show of popular acceptance. He saw, however, that this was no real loyalty, and was wholly unreliable. He did not lack intimate friends and faithful followers, but realized that, on the whole, neither the people nor their leaders were prepared to accept Him at His own estimate.

His conversation with Nicodemus doubtless represents a kind of experience of which He often availed Himself. Personal contact with real inquirers made an opportunity which He would not forego to give expression to the deeper truths of which His heart was full to overflowing. Nicodemus had evidently watched the prophet from Galilee until he was convinced of His sincerity and spiritual power. He determined to give Him quiet encouragement and to get more of His mind. Not unnaturally there is mingled condescension and respect in his first remark. He extends a sort of fellowship to Jesus and yet implies that he comes to consider with Him the problems of the kingdom of God. The reply

of Jesus shows His courage and His consistency. He did not compromise even with this influential man, but reminded him that the kingdom was spiritual and that men would enter it by a purely spiritual act. Even Nicodemus was taken aback by this reversal of time-honored religious values, so that Jesus had to remind him that it was based upon genuine experience and profound conviction, and to affirm that it opened the way to the free acceptance of membership in God's kingdom by all men.

The words that follow in the Gospel are a commentary on this great declaration. Every revelation involves some sort of revolution or readjustment. Those who obstinately refuse to give it consideration pronounce their own judgment by making clear their lack of candor and of religious purpose. The doer and lover of truth always welcomes the light. The reason why Jesus had met with so little response was that men were not seeking for truth but for the confirmation of their own ideas.

The events touched upon in this narrative reveal the thought which filled the heart of Jesus at this time. He found in the holy city a strong tendency to substitute the formal for the real in religious experience. His indignant attack upon the traffic in the temple was an assertion of higher religious ideals. At that time as to-day a true reverence for the house of God was an index of the quality of the religious life. There are money-changers and market men who sometimes need expulsion from the sanctuary to-day. Business ability is an excellent servant of religion but a bad master.

The keen desire of Jesus to discover and encourage spiritual values is likewise exhibited in His interview with the "teacher of Israel." He went to the very heart of religion in a sentence. No one can be counted as a real member of God's kingdom who has not begun to direct his life from the standpoint of God. It is natural for a human being to think of his own interests. Partnership with God implies that he thinks also of

God's interests. This is possible for any man, but it is not natural. It can only be established by the acceptance, unconscious or definite, yet always deliberate, of a relationship with God which makes His will the arbiter of our own. But this is such a change from self-will that it amounts to a complete reorganization of one's character. He who experiences it has been "born anew" into submissive fellowship with God.

Chapter 8. — The Journey through Samaria to Galilee.

Jo. 3:22—4:42.

How long Jesus remained in Judea cannot be exactly determined; the data are very obscure. The fourth Gospel implies that He withdrew to Galilee because of the distrust and jealousy of the Pharisees. They could not agree with Him and strongly objected to His growing influence with the people among whom He found in the aggregate many followers. Even the disciples of John the Baptist had some twinges of jealousy when they noted that Jesus was overshadowing their beloved master. But John himself was quick to declare that he was the sponsor and friend of Jesus and that his own obscurity was inevitable. A remarkable declaration even for one so high-minded and clear of vision as John! The Baptist's message and methods were at the spiritual level of his age. It responded to his call for repentance and consecration; but was confused by that of Jesus, partly because of its simplicity. The Judeans in particular were unprepared to receive a conception of religion which minimized its forms.

It became clear, therefore, to Jesus that no far-reaching results were to be attained in Judea. Galilee offered a better opportunity. Its people were less con-

servative, more open to conviction. Among them Jesus might be able to find real disciples.

To reach His chosen home at Capernaum He would naturally pass through Samaria. This rich province was no longer alien territory nor exclusively inhabited by Samaritans, but there was no friendliness nor even tolerance between men of Samaritan origin and Jews. The little company could walk along unmolested, the disciples could buy food and probably shelter, but their one purpose would be to pass through to Galilee. The mutual hatred of the two peoples did not lessen with time.

This bitter prejudice originated several centuries earlier. The Jews of Ezra's time regarded the Samaritans as a mongrel race and refused to permit them to participate in worship or to intermarry with Judeans. Nehemiah expelled from Judea a priest of high rank who defied these rules. The young priest inaugurated on Mount Gerizim a rival sanctuary and ritual, to which the Samaritans became loyal. Curiously, while the scope of a Jewish ritual and the contents of its Scripture broadened, that of Samaria remained unaltered. This conservatism became finally a matter of pride with the Samaritans. The two similar yet rival cults fostered a jealousy which increased with every decade. The strong control of the Romans prevented national outbreaks or reprisals, but each people disliked and mistrusted the other.

It was characteristic of Jesus to have no share in this national prejudice. He, more than any other in his day, could judge men and women for themselves without prejudice. He was thus able to put Himself in their place and to reach their hearts. Doubtless there were many interesting experiences during the journey, but one only is related. The disciples of Jesus would have thought it a waste of the Master's time or worse, but to Him it was an inspiring opportunity.

The group of travelers had paused at a well-known landmark where the great road which they had been

traveling forked in two directions, one branch turning westward to Shechem, the other continuing northward past the neighboring village of Askar, which is generally identified with the Sychar of the Gospel. These two



Shechem in Samaria, near Jacob's Well.

From a photograph.

centers of population were conveniently near. Apparently Jesus wished to avoid Shechem and Sebaste and purposed to continue northward. Jacob's well made a convenient and congenial resting-place for Him, while the disciples went in search of food, probably to the city.

To this ancient well a Samaritan woman came to draw water for her household. Surprise has often been expressed that any one should come from either Shechem or Askar to this well, passing necessarily more abundant supplies on the way. The fact, however, that it was the well dug by Jacob was enough to endear it to the people and to give its water a peculiar value. An Oriental will always ignore convenience in favor of custom.

Jesus asked the woman for a drink of water. Accustomed to Jewish disdain, she wondered that the Rabbi was willing to accept a courtesy from her. The opportunity to give her a glimpse of nobler aims and motives Jesus seized. "Little do you know who I am, woman, or you would be asking a boon from me, not water for quenching a passing thirst, but living water." "But why should one care for better water than that

which our forefather Jacob secured?" "That which I can give is better than this water," said Jesus, "because it does away with thirst and is always at hand." She naturally did not comprehend the meaning of Jesus, so that He took the quickest way of getting at her spiritual need by referring to her social relations. His remarkable insight convinced her that Jesus was a prophet. At once she pressed Him to solve the standing problem of Samaritan religion. Probably she really wished to determine whether He could be of any help to her race. The never-ended dispute between the two peoples related to the proper place of worship, the Samaritans claiming that Mount Gerizim was a more ancient sanctuary than Jerusalem. It was certainly the natural center of Palestine.

Her query gave occasion to one of the noblest utterances ever expressed, placing religion "beyond every geographical limit" and granting "the charter of universal worship." God welcomes as His worshipers those who intelligently and sincerely yield their wills to His, wherever they may live or however they are born. He needs no temple, neither do those who worship Him.

Naturally the woman was overwhelmed and bewildered. She appealed to the final arbiter, the expected Messiah. Her conviction that Jesus was the Messiah was really based on the fact which she could grasp that He seemed to know her through and through. It was enough, however, to send her flying homeward to find her neighbors and bring them to Jesus.

Before she departed the disciples returned. Shocked as they were at finding Jesus talking with a woman, and a Samaritan at that, they did not venture to question Him. They pressed Him to take food, but His heart was too full of joy. His reply to the woman's question gave a range to His thought and a sense of His opportunity which thrilled His whole being. He could only bid them look out upon the spiritual harvest field which God had prepared His people to reap. The approaching Samaritans were but a suggestion of the waiting world

It was easier for the disciples to plan for the conversion of the greater world lying at a distance than of this foreign nation at their doors, to forget their antipathy to other and less well-known nations than to extend a hearty friendship to the hated Samaritans. Jesus by His example and by His enthusiasm taught a lesson which will never be out of date. The true follower of Jesus will do his missionary work as he goes along, and with the clear-cut purpose of evangelizing the whole world.

The simple resting at a well gave occasion for another significant declaration. Formalism in religion has a value, but a very subordinate one. Good religious habits help us, but after all are only a convenience. We cannot worship God in spirit and in truth by merely doing outward acts. If we could, worship would be much easier than it now is. The wonderful privilege and solemn responsibility of true spiritual worship lies in the fact that it brings the individual soul into the immediate presence of God and compels it to be perfectly honest before Him. This leads to penitence, submission, trust, and to right views of truth and duty. Through it the human and the divine enter into fellowship, and the human goes forth into the battle of life, strong in the help which God gives. Such worship is the highest act of which man is capable.

Chapter 9.—Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth.

Mt. 4:12-17; Lu. 3:19, 20; 4:14-30; Jo. 4:43-54.

When Jesus reached Galilee He was once more in His real homeland, which promised to Him not only the seclusion which He apparently desired for a time, but the relative obscurity which a prophet's own country proverbially affords. The people of Galilee were not likely to overrate one who was everywhere known as a citizen of Nazareth. Because of the deeds which many of them had witnessed, they were disposed, on the other hand, to give candid and friendly consideration to His claims.

That He had met with discouraging results from the ministry in Judea argued nothing regarding the future. Judea and Galilee were in many respects as distinct as England and the United States. They had much in common, but differed widely. The Galileans were more enterprising, more responsive to that which was fresh and new, less dominated by the hierarchy. King Herod was keen to protect his political interests, but was indifferent toward technical questions of religion, and slow to lend himself to Pharisaic plottings. The Sanhedrin could act only under his authority. All the conditions in Galilee favored an unhampered and straightforward appeal to the people.

Students of the active life of Jesus are puzzled to determine the actual sequence of events at the very beginning of the Galilean ministry, prior to the call of the four disciples at Capernaum. The fourth Gospel seems to ascribe to this period the incident of the healing of the nobleman's son, while the Gospel according to Luke inserts a visit to Nazareth.

That Jesus adopted Capernaum as His home in place of Nazareth is fully attested. The fourth Gospel suggests (2:12) that this choice was made before Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the first passover. In any case the decisive reasons for the change were the size,

natural importance and convenient location of Capernaum. It was much better suited to His needs as a headquarters.

If Jesus made two visits to Nazareth and twice healed a young lad who was very dear to a military officer at Capernaum, then beyond question these two incidents belong to the early portion of His stay in Galilee. So thoroughly do the narratives of Matthew (ch. 8) and Luke (ch. 7) of the healing of the centurion's servant differ in detail from that of John concerning the healing of the son of the nobleman that they appear to refer to distinct occurrences. Regarding two visits to Nazareth there is much less assurance. There can be no doubt that Jesus went to Nazareth later on in His ministry, as attested by Matthew 13 and Mark 6. But many scholars, including such judicious interpreters as Bruce and Rhees, are inclined to think that Luke inserted the story of the visit to Nazareth at the beginning of his description of the active ministry in Galilee, not because it belonged there historically, but because it fitted in illustratively, giving an admirable exhibition of the method of Jesus in His public synagogue ministry and of the deep impression which He everywhere made.

Each episode is less an account of historical fact than the exhibit of a personality. They were "signs" indeed of the depth and sweetness of the heart of Jesus, and of His power over men. Rulers and people alike submitted to His spell, when in His presence. They wondered at His unselfish goodness.

The healing of the son of the royal officer of Capernaum revealed more than the power which Jesus could wield; it showed His anxiety to get at a man's inmost nature. He avoided publicity or any spectacular display or even personal recognition. His one desire was to awaken a belief in the power and goodness of God. When once convinced that the officer was docile and trustful, throwing himself on God's mercy, Jesus granted his prayer.

The visit to the synagogue was, no doubt, like many a visit before and after it. The synagogue was an agency providentially made ready to His hand, ideal for His purposes. It originated centuries away during the Babylonian exile, when the Jewish captives, unable to sacrifice at the temple, formed the custom of assembling together regularly for the reading and interpretation of Scripture and for related religious exercises. Thus quickly grew up a patriotic and religious institution of great significance, a distinct contribution to the permanence, unity and intelligence of Judaism. The synagogue became the working center of Jewish village life. The re-establishment of the temple only increased its usefulness. It was meeting house, school and forum all in one. It fostered intelligence, upheld religion, and furnished a democratic rallying place. The synagogue was controlled by the community in which it was placed, was frequented by all but the outcast population, and really afforded a free and fair platform for one who had a message for the people to which they were willing to listen. During the first half of the ministry of Jesus He was able to make effective use of the synagogues, thus appealing squarely to the people.

Luke's story of the day which Jesus spent at Nazareth is noteworthy alike for its interesting details of a synagogue service, for its charm as a narrative of His active life, and for its skilful sketch of the gracious personality of Jesus. It takes high rank in a Gospel which includes many passages of unusual beauty and impressiveness. The reader is invited to realize the power of the appeal which Jesus made to men in His synagogue preaching. The fact that it was at His boyhood home heightens the effect. Under ordinary circumstances this would be an advantage, but He found it otherwise. His old neighbors were prejudiced against Him, the son of their carpenter. But prejudiced or not, they listened to Him with beating hearts.

Invited to speak in the synagogue Jesus made an unequivocal declaration of His Messiahship, using the pas-

sage in Isaiah 61 which every auditor would interpret Messianically. His audience felt the spell of His personality, but betrayed two dominant emotions, a sense of His presumption and a desire to see some wonders. Of a willingness to freely accept Him on His proffered basis they showed no trace. And when He reminded them that God's grace and power were not bestowed on men because of their birth, but only as they gave occasion for their manifestation to men, the angry villagers would have thrust Him over the cliff.

There is a tragic element in this incident which finds a parallel in everyday life. The people of Nazareth were their own worst enemies. They might have been the closest allies of Jesus, often welcoming Him to their midst. They might have stood next to the Twelve in His affection and in His unreserved revelation of Himself. They excluded themselves from this supremely great and blessed privilege by unreasoning prejudice and stubborn unwillingness to yield to the force of truth.

No folly is so great or so far-reaching in its consequences as a stubborn refusal to face religious facts. As well might one seek to avoid an avalanche by preventing himself from hearing the roar of its descent. He who takes the attitude of the men of Nazareth deliberately dwarfs his life, decreases his power, and dishonors his personality.



Precipice near Nazareth.

Four places near Nazareth are pointed out as the Mount of Precipitation. The rock in the picture is nearest the city and is probably the correct one.

Chapter 10.—The Call of the Four.

Mt. 4:13-16; Mk. 1:16-45; Lu. 5:1-11.

Capernaum on the Galilean lake was a natural and for many reasons a strategic center for the activity which Jesus planned to begin. With a large population, drawn from every quarter by the opportunities for trade, it was flanked in each direction by an almost uninterrupted series of towns and villages which nearly encircled the lake. A constant traffic was carried on with other parts of the country over the great highways which centered at Capernaum or passed through it. Unlike such cities as the Cæsareas it was thronged with Jews who made it their home. Jesus had right at hand all Galilee, probably all Palestine, in miniature. Here He began His work and to it as His home He repeatedly returned.



The Shore at Khan Minyeh.

The weight of opinion favors Khan Minyeh as the probable site of Capernaum, although many locate it two and a half miles north of Tell Hum.

(Cut from "Leeper photographs," copyright, 1902. Courtesy of Hammond Publishing Co., Milwaukee.)

The exact site of this city, so closely associated with the Master's life, cannot be known to-day with absolute assurance. It was on the northwestern shore of the lake at a point which favored both the active trade by land and the fishing industry on its teeming waters. It

was a useful and usable location for carrying out the plans of Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew our attention is called to a striking coincidence. By the settlement of Jesus at Capernaum the hope of Isaiah was given a notable fulfilment. The region which once sat in despairing gloom was now to be illumined by Him who was the Light of life.

Reaching Capernaum again, Jesus at once bethought Himself of those companions who had given Him their fealty on the banks of the Jordan and had shown in full measure their reliability and intelligence. They had apparently returned to their homes and wonted round of duties, awaiting, perhaps, the beginning of His ministry in their neighborhood. The quickness with which they understood and accepted His call to permanent discipleship with all that it implied in those days is an indication that they were not wholly taken by surprise. On the other hand, it would be surprising, for even such a remarkable judge of character as Jesus, to summon in quick succession four men, on whom His glance had barely rested, to a position of intimacy and far-reaching influence. The story of the fourth Gospel is quite essential to the probability of the other narratives.

The story of Luke is supplemental to that of Matthew and Mark. It implies that He had begun the work of preaching and healing in the city and was already thronged by an eager multitude, when He drew near His former followers. After making use of Peter's boat as a pulpit, He bade His host resume his accustomed employment. Peter had been hard at work all night to no purpose, but he willingly responded to the suggestion of his beloved leader. With Jesus as a partner the catch of fish was astounding. Both Peter and his helpers were deeply stirred. They saw beyond the mere yield of fish. They felt that Jesus had more than a passing purpose in this gracious act. It was an acted parable of resourcefulness and invitation. Peter could not but declare himself unworthy of such a leader; yet

with unreserving and instant loyalty he and his friends accepted the definite words of invitation, which were also a promise of larger serviceableness.

Of the busy, successful life that ensued the Gospel of Mark gives us a vivid glimpse. It bears testimony to the multitudes who were attracted by the words and deeds of the new Teacher. They met Him everywhere—by the shore of the lake, at His home, in the synagogue. They followed Him up, eager to listen to His stirring message about the heavenly kingdom and to see His gracious deeds. Upon these throngs He made a tremendous impression. No religious leader whom they had known had been like Jesus. Instead of repeating the opinions of the learned interpreters of Judaism, as the scribes were wont to do, Jesus actually declared in a straightforward way His own views of truth and appealed for confirmation to their own spiritual judgments. He dared to assert His independence and to assume authority for Himself. It was revolutionary, but attractive.

When He not only taught them in words which made a strong and direct appeal to their spiritual selves, but demonstrated His power over the various forms of bodily or mental disease current among the people, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The whole city was stirred. Its citizens vied in expressing their joy at His welcome presence among them, and in spreading the news far and wide. The experiences of one Sabbath day in the city illustrate the pressure upon Him from all sides, partly because of need, partly because of curiosity.

The people of Capernaum would have gladly kept Him in their midst, but He had broader plans. His brief stay had impressed His personality and His message upon them. Other communities needed Him more. So despite their entreaties He departed to make a tour of the Galilean villages. Everywhere the synagogues were open to Him, and His words and deeds produced the same mingled effect of awe and enthusiasm. The throngs increased in size and pertinacity, until it became

almost impossible for Jesus to continue His work in the towns.

The narrative of Mark gives us two characteristic facts about Jesus. In the first place He had to go away continually by Himself to commune in prayer with God. No one was ever so dependent on God as Jesus. He was never too busy or too weary to find time for prayer. It was the source of His wonderful confidence, balance and insight. Is it wrong to suppose that even He sought to be strengthened against the temptations of great popularity? Again He adopted from the outset a policy of reserve and silence regarding His miracles, avoiding as far as feasible all notoriety. The disobedience of the grateful and thoughtless leper, who had been healed of his repulsive malady, only drove Jesus away from the haunts of men. He healed men because of their need, not to exhibit His power. He was anxious to make no other impression than a spiritual one.

There is an instructive contrast between the numbers who seemed to desire to see Jesus and the few whom He could make into loyal and efficient disciples. The crowds had after all a selfish purpose. They were curious to see the strange Teacher or desirous of some sort of advantage for themselves. They readily melted away and could not be depended upon. There was little or no response to a fine and true religious leadership, such as made Peter, Andrew, James and John into potential apostles. These four far outweighed in real importance to Jesus the hundreds or thousands who made up the crowded assemblies which seemed so anxious to get near Him. Perfunctory, unreliable, nominal allegiance to Christ is the greatest weakness of the Christian church to-day. Those whom He uses in His exalted service and favors with intimacy are the few who deliberately but gladly make personal response to His call.

Chapter 11.—The Beginning of Pharisaic Opposition in Galilee.

Mk. 2:1-22.

The early days of the Galilean ministry may well have been days of almost unalloyed delight to Jesus. He had free scope for His work of preaching and healing; great numbers were eager to be near Him. He suffered only because of the thoughtlessness of those who were His grateful and friendly followers. Under such conditions He would not spare Himself. Sheer bodily collapse was all that would bring Him to a pause in His gracious work of friendly appeal.

Naturally, with His outspoken ideas concerning the kingdom that ought to be, this idyllic situation could not long continue. He had to deal with more than an impressionable and ready populace. These were accustomed to be guided in their religious ideas by the scribes and honored members of the Pharisaic party, whose views were diametrically opposed to those which Jesus held. Their expected kingdom was a national affair, membership in it being gained by birth or adoption into Judaism; His was a universal brotherhood of service with moral and spiritual conditions only. They regarded religion as best safeguarded by a strict system of rules for daily life; He aimed to secure holiness by inculcating true standards and motives and desires. They were scrupulous about the appearance of things; He about their reality. Necessarily His words aroused questionings and disputes; His deeds were yet more disquieting.

The rapid succession of His deeds of healing aroused a popular furor. Naturally they likewise gave Him standing as a religious authority, although their value was not, perhaps, as an attestation of His words so much as an exhibit of His personality. Judging less from the meager detail of the narratives than from the uniform habit of His life, we may declare with confidence that Jesus continually emphasized the healings as

a manifestation of the love and goodness of God, who was helping human-kind through Him. They were not personal triumphs of power but divine acts of grace. In any case, however, these deeds gave authority to His declarations, and made Him a public rival of the Pharisaic party as a director of the public conscience.

The Gospel of Mark with dramatic skill introduces us to this second inevitable stage of the active ministry. After making clear the tremendous popularity of Jesus it groups together in the second chapter a series of incidents which exhibit the growing irritation of the religious leaders of Judaism and its varied causes. These did not probably happen in immediate succession. Their grouping emphasizes the importance of the fact that the words and deeds of Jesus brought Him very quickly into open conflict with the leaders.

Mark's Gospel tells us that Jesus had come back to Capernaum after a busy tour of the villages of Galilee. So much interest had He aroused that, according to Luke, the Pharisees, alert to any religious movement, had flocked from every direction, even from Judea, to see and hear Him. Naturally their mood was critical rather than receptive, for He was not of their accustomed kind. Four sorts of proof of this were soon forthcoming.

The first came unexpectedly during a crowded service at His unpretentious abode in Capernaum. He was earnestly engaged in preaching to a throng which blocked every ingress, when four resolute men arrived with a paralytic to whom they had evidently promised a successful interview with the Master. Unable to get the patient through the crowd, and doubtless aware by experience that those who postponed seeing Him sometimes lost their golden opportunity, the four friends opened the roof and lowered the paralytic to the floor in front of Jesus. This unusual act exhibited their earnestness and confidence, always irresistible qualities with Jesus. With a touch of tenderness He told the cripple that he might start his life anew on a nobler

basis. His declaration was technically blasphemous to a religious thinker of the day, but only when taken with blind literalness. However, Jesus accepted their chal-

lenge and again demonstrated that God had given Him the right to assert a religious independence.



Outside Stairs to the Roof.

The second bit of evidence was less perplexing. Jesus ignored their social conventions. By common consent and, in the main, for excellent reasons, the

Jewish collectors of taxes were held in great abhorrence. For a Pharisee to hold converse with one of them would expose him to severe penalties, if not to excommunication. The "publicans" referred to in the New Testament were the Jews who were willing to serve as direct gatherers of the revenues from the people. They were generally extortionate, unpatriotic and irreligious. One man classed as a publican Jesus summoned to discipleship. Matthew had, no doubt, listened to Jesus more than once, and was ready to follow Him if given a chance. He was an exceptional man, and may have merely been a collector of business imposts, a species of tax less odious to the Jews than those levied directly. In any case Jesus saw His possibilities and invited him to become an associate. It was an extremely unpharisaic act, but one which spoke volumes concerning the range of the sympathies of Jesus.

This testimony He enforced by accepting His new disciple's invitation to a feast. It may have been a testimonial of gratitude; for Matthew it was an act of emancipation for his circle of friends. That publicans and sinners were fit subjects for social sympathy and

religious uplift was a revolutionary idea in the Judaism of the day. They were religious outcasts, forbidden the privileges of the synagogue; made to feel that they had forfeited the grace of God. When Jesus deliberately called one of them as an intimate disciple and sat down at a friendly banquet with many more, it was a virtual declaration on His part that He would preach the service of God to every human being capable of receiving His message, barred by no conventions or scruples which others entertained. His answer to the indignant protest of the Pharisees was the plea that as a preacher of the goodness of God He was to be guided, not by attractiveness, but by need.

The fourth proof had to do with fasting. The Law prescribed one fast each year on the great Day of Atonement, but the strict Pharisees fasted twice a week. John and his disciples sympathized with this practice. Jesus rather ignored the custom and thereby aroused unfavorable comment. His defense was that fasting truly expresses a feeling of sadness, and is incongruous in case of joy. His message was one of hope. It sought forms of expression which fitted its freedom and fulness of life. Until His followers had reason for sadness there was no sense in their mourning.

Jesus hereby declared a great principle of religious life. At all costs it must be real and genuine. Whatever forms it takes must be the expression of actual sentiment. Christianity regulates conduct, not by rules and forms but by motives based on principles. In so far as our religious life is mechanical and formal, to that degree is it unreligious. Good habits of procedure are of untold value, but a meaningless custom cannot save a soul.

Another great principle was involved in His social intercourse with the friends of Matthew. The Christian may have his preferences among men, he may select a few for his intimate associates; he is bound, however, to regard the whole human world as within his range of helpful service.

Chapter 12.—The Sabbath Question.

Mk. 2:23—3:6; Jo. 5:1-18.

Excited as the Jewish leaders became over the indifference of Jesus to their prejudices or customs, they might not have declared enmity against Him had He not ignored one of the dearest conventions of their system of religion, the reverence due to the sanctity of the Sabbath day. That He denounced the popular sentiment as a spurious, useless reverence unworthy the name, confusing real Sabbath keeping with that which was but a mockery of it, made no impression on these leaders of Judaism. They concluded that He was unalterably hostile to all that they considered most worth the while, or else criminally careless in His obedience; and they determined to put an end to His influence.

From Jewish writings an impressive idea is conveyed of the minuteness and multiplicity of the regulations through which the scribes sought to prevent the breaking of the fourth commandment. By a careful interpretation of the relevant passages in the Law they constructed a list of thirty-nine acts forbidden on the Sabbath. But these were only a sort of foundation. Each prohibited action served as a type for an endless number of other acts which were by analogy unlawful. Reaping and threshing were regarded as forbidden by the law, although plucking the ears of standing grain was not. After long debate it was decided that plucking the ears and rubbing them with the hands to get out the grain was a sort of reaping and threshing, and hence unpermissible on the Sabbath. Carrying burdens from one abode to another was forbidden, but one who desired for some reason to have freedom of action on the Sabbath within a certain area could make it constructively his abode by depositing food before the Sabbath, at various points within it. Such subterfuges, all too common, revealed the whole structure of Sabbath legislation to be a "casuistical labyrinth" with no outlet of principle. To those who were religiously minded and earnestly set

themselves to obey the Law, it was a grievous yoke. The Sabbath day became a time of anxiety akin to torture, or else of dull and lifeless torpor. Those who cared only to keep it technically had a thousand ways of evading its extreme restraints.

Jesus recognized and honored conscientiousness even as to matters in themselves trifling; but His "faithfulness in that which is least" was never an unreasoning fidelity to senseless rules. He appealed always against such customs to a sanctified common sense, pointing out the real end which was to be gained by the original commandment and advising action which most directly would achieve it.

With the two instances of collision with Pharisaic ideas regarding the Sabbath, so representative in character and important in their teaching that each synoptic writer included them at this stage of his narrative of the active ministry of Jesus, we may include the incident at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem as related in John 5. Jesus had gone to Jerusalem on one of those journeys of which Luke 13:22 gives a hint, at the time of a feast which cannot be surely identified. It probably happened not long before or after the incidents in Galilee.

Passing by the well-known pool Jesus saw a helpless cripple, whose plight aroused His pitying sympathy. Encouraging him and challenging his faith, Jesus commanded the man to walk home with his sleeping-mat, not to exhibit his strength but in token of his new-found freedom. Charged with the serious offence of Sabbath-breaking, he excused himself by declaring that the one who healed him had commanded him to do so. The religious leaders then had a valid objection to Jesus which they pressed. His defense that God's idea of a Sabbath was not such as to prevent the continuance of His active Providence, and that He was only following the Divine example, simply aroused their fury. They challenged His right to declare God's will and ways, thus calling forth from Jesus a noble assertion of His faithful yet unique harmony with the purposes of God

and the abundant witness available regarding Himself.

A passing incident in Galilee gave occasion for another notable saying. As He and His disciples were walking through a field of grain, some of them plucked a few ears and rubbed out the grains in order to eat



Reservoir near the Church of St. Anne, in Jerusalem.



Birket Israel, near St. Stephen's Gate, Jerusalem.

There is much uncertainty regarding the site of the pool of Bethesda. Some identify it with the deep reservoir near the church of St. Anne; others connect it with "Birket Israel," both of which are shown above. Others identify it with the Virgin's pool, on the southern slope of the temple mount, near the brook Kidron.

them. This gathering and eating was not in itself objectionable, but, taking place on the Sabbath, it was regarded as a sort of reaping and threshing, and hence unlawful. Jesus met Pharisaic criticism by an *ad hominem* argument. He cited the well-known case of David and the customary duty of the priesthood to show that Sabbatic law had often to give way to higher interests, then claiming that in the interest of mankind He was truly interpreting and using the Sabbath.

The cure of the man with the withered hand afforded another striking instance of the complete separation between Jesus and the religious leaders of Judaism on this Sabbath question. The latter were constantly on

the watch for new occasions for criticism. The incident illustrated happily the scope of the principle of human need asserted by Jesus. The man could have waited another day without injury, hence his case afforded a good test. The throng watched Jesus closely to see whether He would deliberately heal the man on the holy day. He appealed to their religious common sense, a truly novel way of settling religious disputes in that day! As Rhees remarks, He was "for His generation the great discoverer of the conscience" and the champion of its dignity against traditional practice. "Would you not do," said He, "as much for a man as for a sheep?" and healed the man. The stubborn antagonism of the Pharisees was stirred to madness by this cool defiance of their traditions. They lost no time in plotting His destruction.

With the Pharisaic party in Galilee actively opposed to Him His difficulties were greatly increased. They had the power of setting the public mind against Him. They would undo His work as fast as He could develop it. They were organized while He stood virtually alone. The people still thronged to hear Him and be healed, yet their loyalty was not to be relied upon. In order to make His efforts count for the utmost and to secure at least a few who would really understand Him, He found it necessary to choose a company of picked disciples with whom He could hold intimate companionship. The second stage of Pharisaic hostility directly caused the third and most fruitful act of His ministry—the choice of the Twelve.

The Christian conception of the Sabbath is not an abrogation of the fourth commandment but its true and fruitful interpretation. The Sabbath should stand for freedom of life, the free service and worship of God, and free service toward men. It is God's day and hence justifies and claims whatever will bring mankind closer to God. It is man's day too, and must be intelligently used for man's highest welfare. It is a day of rest from life's vocation in the interest of a fuller and richer hu-

man existence. Fitly did the early Church name the Christian equivalent of the Sabbath the Lord's day, for it was Jesus Himself who gave it significance and declared its value.

The Christian Sunday cannot be kept sacred by rules. They inevitably tend to magnify the letter to the exclusion of the spirit of obedience. At all costs the reverse should become true. The Sabbatic law was given, not in order that Sabbaths should be forever kept, but to promote the higher spiritual welfare of man. Hence the true observance of the seventh day demands only an honest scrupulousness, by each generation for itself, to use it in such a way as will further the spiritual interests of society and keep men consciously in close relationship with God.

Chapter 13.—The Beginnings of the Active Ministry of Jesus. A Review.

Our studies in the active ministry of Jesus have reached a definite turning-point. Because of the influence of the Pharisees over the common people it became necessary for Jesus at this time to adopt a new method in His ministry which considerably altered its emphasis. Before entering upon the period which this new method distinguished, it is desirable to survey the progress of the life of Jesus from its beginning to the development and manifestation of rancorous hatred by the Pharisaic party.

The events which have been considered in turn were those of the infancy and youth of Jesus, and of His growth to manhood, His long, silent preparation for ideal serviceableness, the public preaching of John the Baptist, the appearance of Jesus at the Jordan and His recognition by John, His baptism and temptation, the

introduction to Jesus by John of His four best disciples, their free choice of Jesus, His entrance on His ministry, His manifestation of Himself to the nation at Jerusalem, His further ministry of preaching, healing and baptism in Judea, the suggestive episode in Samaria, the selection of Capernaum as a permanent abode, the initiation of an active ministry in Galilee by the call of the four to become His permanent followers, the conduct in the synagogues of Galilee of a swiftly popular ministry of preaching and healing, and the certain consequence of such popularity on the part of such a religious leader—namely, all manner of criticism from the perplexed and anxious Pharisees, leading gradually to a position of deliberate hostility to Jesus and to a determination to prevent Him from continuing His work among the people.

The portion of this period succeeding the appearance of John the Baptist at the Jordan included the details of chief importance in this survey. Its chronology is one of the unsettled problems for the student of the Gospels and of the life of Jesus. There is scarcely any difference of opinion among those who seek to unify our available testimony to the life and words of Jesus regarding the chronology of the remainder of the active ministry. A month or two less than two years is allowed for the events from the choice of the Twelve to the crucifixion. The question in debate relates to the length of the earlier period, the one under review. Was it a little more than a year in length, or only ten or twelve weeks? The data in the Gospels are insufficient to determine this positively. Each student must determine for himself whether the shorter time could have been adequate, not merely for the performance of the acts narrated, but for the development implied. Good scholars differ in judgment on this problem of chronology. Many hold to a three years' active ministry for the principal reason that no briefer period seems adequate for all that Jesus accomplished. This is the view adopted in the lessons on which these notes are based.

Others regard a two-years' ministry as sufficient. Those who thus differ in opinion on this point concur in accepting the facts of the life of Jesus as given in the Gospels.

To this early portion of the life of Jesus the Gospel writers devoted on the whole the least space. True to the promise of its prologue, the third Gospel gave fullest attention to the available data of the period prior to the appearance of John the Baptist, while the first Gospel contributed details which foreshadowed the glory of Him who was to be His people's awaited leader. Apart from these details, peculiarly appropriate to each, and from those added from the fourth Gospel, relating to His first meeting with the Four and their rapid growth in fellowship and insight, and to the events of His Judean ministry, the stirring story of the beginnings of the ministry in Galilee is most fully related in the terse but vivid narrative of Mark. Neither this Gospel nor the others relate one-tenth of what happened during these busy weeks. Each contributes its impression of the Master in His active career.

The Gospel of Matthew seems to lay emphasis on the work itself, its diversity of character, its adequacy and representativeness. It was the development of a program by one who was a true leader, a divine program, however, and a leader who exhibited Messiahship in whatever He said or did. The Gospel of Mark conveys rather the tremendous impression made by the personality of Jesus, by His sincerity, unselfishness, straightforwardness and self-confidence, and the undoubtable power He wielded. He was one who achieved things, yet not by robbing others of their rights but by enlisting their co-operation in His noble aims and by relieving their troubles and lifting off the burden of their sins. He was a great Leader of men. The Gospel of Luke dwells in many little ways on the breadth and depth of the gracious love of Jesus for men, as it expressed itself by deed and word, whether to His envious neighbors of Nazareth, or to a disciple paying Him in-

voluntary but heartfelt tribute, or to those who would limit His ministry to the respectable synagogue frequenters of Galilee. A burning passion for human beings and for their complete salvation and a patience which stood every test but that of limitation, an energy and forcefulness which routed all opposition, a simplicity of address and winsomeness of manner which attracted even the most timid auditor, a self-confidence which puzzled all the people and gave offense to the Pharisees, and a mastery of the situation which enabled Jesus for a time to go His way unmolested, although by His defiance of Pharisaic prejudice He aroused a formidable hostility among them against Him and all who followed Him—these are the lines of the portrait drawn for us by His loving friends. They invite several remarks regarding His own purposes during this period.

It seems quite clear that Jesus gave no indication of uncertainty regarding Himself or of indecision regarding His policy. That those around Him, disciples and Pharisees alike, held varying views concerning Him is evident. Every one of them had been trained from boyhood to conceptions which made it difficult for the most honest-minded among them to understand Jesus as a Messiah. He puzzled them. He fitted the part in some respects but not at all in others. They all needed education. There is no evidence that Jesus did. From the outset of the ministry He knew Himself, His policy and His aims.

In spite of this clear consciousness regarding Himself and His work, He kept His personal claims in the background during this early period. He avoided publicity and, even more carefully, notoriety. It was enough for Him at present to be known as the good and helpful Prophet of God from Nazareth, who went everywhere doing good in God's name, and proclaiming a message of repentance from selfishness and sin and of preparation for the kingdom of heaven. It was John's message presented more persuasively and at first hand.

He was evidently desirous that all Galilee should hear

this message as formulated by Him, and be brought face to face with the appeal of the kingdom. He spared no energy, lost no opportunity, avoided no responsibility which could contribute to this result. It was a work in the large, a dealing with people in the mass, a work of impression rather than of education. He could not visit every synagogue in Galilee, but following such methods He could rely upon having preached to an auditor or two from every synagogue. Before Pharisaic hostility had reached a climax, all Galilee was talking about Him, His message and His deeds.

Thousands held Him in awe, a few feared Him, a growing group gave Him their confidence. He still perplexed them, but they had no doubt that He was the kindest, wisest, most resourceful and most Godlike man they had ever known.

Chapter 14. The Choice of the Twelve.

Mt. 12 : 15-21 ; Mk. 3 : 7-19a ; Lu. 6 : 12-19.

A striking testimonial to the practical wisdom and self command of Jesus is afforded by His selection, at this time of popularity and conflict, of twelve men to become His constant and favored companions. While enthusiastic throngs still surround Him, to hear His words and witness His deeds of gracious kindness, and He had every reason to exult in His independent power, He deliberately reserved His best self for a small body of chosen men. It was more than the impulsive act of a lonely leader, craving sympathetic associates, although no one ever felt the need of fellowship and friendship more than He ; it was more than the attempt of one who realized the urgent need of the spreading abroad of the message about the kingdom of heaven to secure able as-

sistants for His campaign; it was a deliberate act exhibiting profound insight, leading to a happy solution of the immediate problem of evangelization and of the more remote yet more important problem of the organization and maintenance of the new society of men like-minded with Himself.

It is interesting to note the varying explanations of this important action given in the Synoptic Gospels. It was too far-reaching and significant to be fully exhausted by one narrator. Each evangelist seems impressed by that aspect of it which would appeal to those for whom he was writing. The Gospel according to Matthew calls attention to the multitudes and their eagerness, to the great desire of Jesus to minister to their spiritual needs and leads us to infer that these men were summoned by Him because He desired a band of helpers so that He could press with greater vigor the great work of evangelization. The Gospel of Mark gives more businesslike reasons. It declares that Jesus chose the Twelve to be His companions, to aid Him in the growing work of preaching and healing the throngs who kept coming from every quarter, far outmatching the physical powers of one man, however gifted. The third Gospel, taking as usual the reflective standpoint of the second Christian generation, presents the action of Jesus in its truest light. It lets us know that the Master was deeply conscious of the importance of the occasion. Before He selected the Twelve from the larger group of devoted followers He spent the whole night alone in prayerful communion with God. We may reverently infer that He was pleading for clearness of vision and accuracy of judgment. He was about to inaugurate a new society, the new Christian brotherhood. The Twelve were to be its nucleus.

The Gospel of Luke rightly pictured that day upon the mountain side as a momentous day in the active ministry of Jesus. It marked a real turning point. Jesus must have prepared for it not merely by a night of prayer but even more by days of reflection. He had

seen that the rapidly growing enmity of the Pharisees would soon embarrass His public work and, perhaps, bring it to an end. He met this difficulty with a policy that would enable Him to defy all such opposition and to triumph in spite of it. He would develop an inner circle of intimate associates who could reproduce His spirit and fulfil His mission.

By this time His nominal following had become quite large. Men and women attended Him persistently and from every sort of motive. Here and there was one whom He had distinguished from the others by reason of some special gift or measure of usefulness. From such as these He seemingly made His selection of associates. They were men who had shown their devotion to Him and their enthusiasm for the work He was doing, men who in one form or another were of practical importance to Him. Luke (6:13) suggests that it was a deliberate selection, each man standing for some positive value. The number chosen was, no doubt, suggested by the traditional symbolism of the Jewish race. No other number carried the same suggestion of representativeness to the Jewish mind. The Twelve were to stand for all Israel and thus for the whole human brotherhood.

It is a matter of regret that a small group of these chosen Apostles overshadowed all the others, for each one of the Twelve must have been a marked personality, worthy of our careful study. Synoptic tradition centered around the four and the ill-starred Judas Iscariot. Peter, John and James were the dominating members of the little company. Of them, of Matthew, and, thanks to the Gospel according to John, of Andrew and Philip, Bartholomew and Thomas, we have some conception. So far as we know them they represented quite distinct types, unified by the inspiring personality of their great leader.

Their value did not depend upon their social standing or influence. They represented, apparently, the humbler working class. It is only fair to say that in no

other nation than Israel was the matter of social rank of less importance. The Jewish people was truly democratic. Any man, however humble, could aspire to become a Rabbi, that is, to reach a position of enviable respect and importance. Every man, however noble in birth or wealth, was as a matter of principle taught a means of livelihood. Saul of Tarsus was probably of distinguished parentage, yet fortunately for his independence as a religious leader he was a skilful maker of tents. Not social position but teachableness and ability were the essential qualities of the members of this notable band.

Apostleship, like all other leadership, involved heavy responsibilities, and serious disadvantages. These men had a taste of the cross from the very outset. Had they not been willing to undergo the ostracism and peril of association with Jesus they would never have had the opportunity, for He needed men who could count the cost and ignore it. The full seriousness of the step they took was no more apparent to them than it is to most of those who deliberately ally themselves with unpopular causes. But they were willing to endure whatever would bring them into association with Jesus.

The discipleship of the cross, that is, the discipleship which includes devotion and self-sacrifice, which for Christ's sake assumes the burden of that part of His kingdom which falls to one's lot in life, and spares not itself for His sake, which derives its stability and energy from a continuing sense of fellowship with Him, is the kind most needed in the Church to-day. It is indeed the only discipleship that counts for much in the growth of His kingdom.

Chapter 15.—The Sermon on the Mount: Disciples, Their Rewards, Obligations, and Standards.

Mt. ch. 5.

Bruce has somewhere suggested that the Sermon on the Mount comes to the reader of the New Testament as a surprise. Nothing in the Gospels quite prepares us for such a transcendently great expression of important truth. The Gospels set forth the great impression which Jesus made on men who were keenly alive to spiritual power; they describe the astonishment of the synagogue frequenter at His air of authority and His impressive speech; they afford many examples of His brief but forceful methods of presenting truth; yet, after all, the data thus obtained scarcely justify the expectation of such a discourse.

This is accounted for by the fact that the Synoptic Gospels refer to the teaching or preaching of Jesus at the early stages of His ministry only in general terms. From the Gospel of Mark we know that His fame had already been spread abroad through His unremitting activity in synagogues of Galilee, and that crowds, coming from distant quarters, were thronging about Him. Matthew recognizes the crowds without accounting for them. The sudden introduction of the Sermon in the first Gospel, after the call of the four disciples, gives the impression that its delivery was one of the earliest acts of the Galilean campaign. As a matter of fact, it followed an extended public experience in Galilee.

The necessity for such an utterance as we find in Matthew 5-7 and Luke 6 is made clear when we remember what a new definition Jesus was gradually giving to the expected kingdom of God, and that it was a definite popular expectation that when the Messiah came He would "renew the Law," giving a clear and final interpretation to its many obscurities. Jesus, as one who spoke with authority and not as the scribes, was in a sense bound to explain the nature of the kingdom and the character of its institutions and standards.

There are three good reasons for thinking that the discourse was addressed to the disciples who were quite close to Jesus rather than to the multitude. The Gospel of Mark prefaces the choice of the Twelve, which immediately preceded the Sermon, by indicating that Jesus avoided the multitude. The other two Gospels distinctly mention the disciples as those to whom He spoke, the multitudes forming a background. But the chief reason is the character of the Sermon. It is for those who already were in active sympathy with Him.

The differences between the report of the discourse as found in Matthew and as given in Luke have led to many explanatory theories. It is generally admitted that the version found in the first Gospel includes some material not spoken at this exact time, but added for the sake of massing the teaching of Jesus into logical groups. It is also believed that the version found in the third Gospel has deliberately omitted certain parts of the original discourse. Luke's readers cared nothing for merely Jewish details; they desired His positive, straightforward, universal teaching. To try and determine which version most clearly represents the discourse which Jesus delivered is idle. Bruce suggests that each version is a condensed account of such portions of the lessons given to the disciples during a somewhat extended periodic retirement from the exhausting campaign with the multitudes, as each Evangelist thought was valuable for his hearers. Jesus may have delivered many discourses, going over parallel ground and yet developing distinct themes, such as Pharisaic righteousness, prayer, covetousness, etc.

It is commonly said that the Sermon on the Mount exhibits Jesus as a lawgiver. This is partly true. In form His utterances are legal. In reality the discourse is prophetic. "It does not lay down rules but opens up principles." It reveals Jesus, not really as a casuist and legislator, but as a preacher of good tidings. He was not anxious to specify rules of conduct but to establish permanent principles of religion. He taught not as

the scribes. They declared and applied the precepts of the law. Jesus was often asked to make similar declarations, for instance, in regard to tribute or divorce, but He refused to "sit on Moses' seat" (Mt. 23: 2, 3). His aim was edification, and His method an appeal to the conscience of man. He was distinctively a preacher.

This greatest of recorded utterances is best understood as a deliberate and thoughtful attempt to state clearly the true spiritual values of the older law in terms which by contrast with the current phraseology would become clear. It was not an ordination discourse aimed exclusively at the Twelve, nor a set of ordinances for the new kingdom, nor merely an anti-Pharisaic manifesto. It counted in each of these ways, but was pre-eminently a reinterpretation of current ideas.



Horns of Hattin, the Traditional Place of the Choosing of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount.

(From "Leeper photographs," copyright, 1902. Hammond Publishing Co., Milwaukee.)

The importance of the step now taken by Jesus was very great. He had gathered around Him a chosen band of loyal disciples, identified with Him and with His work. What He said to them was in no sense esoteric in character. His highest teaching was meant for the million. But He now taught His disciples that they might teach the world. He gave them a more organized and comprehensive grasp of the fundamental principles of action in the new kingdom which they were to advocate. He initiated their own thoughtful participation

in the considerations of its problems, particularly in a practical definition of righteousness.

The Beatitudes emphasize the blessedness of those who, notwithstanding their seemingly disadvantageous circumstances, are yet true disciples. Their reward is not in the removal of present conditions but in heavenly happiness. They are judged solely on the basis of their actual character.

But those who have such an outlook are responsible agents, who must exhibit an attitude of friendly helpfulness to the world. They are in the world to redeem it and to illuminate its moral darkness. They are bound to be active and positive participants more than mere willing followers.

But the most earnest disciples need clear views. Jesus must have been asked many times already how His followers were to act under certain circumstances. He refused to lay down exact laws, but went further by forbidding wrong states of mind. Pharisaic righteousness was content to so live as to avoid breaking any specific commandment. But Jesus, instead of prohibiting murder and slander, forbade the spirit of hatred; instead of prohibiting an adulterous act, forbade an impure thought; instead of prohibiting perjury, forbade all untruthfulness under any pretext; instead of limiting the right to retaliate, required a friendly attitude toward all oppressors; instead of a partial obligation of kindness, imposed an unlimited and universal obligation. For each detail of casuistry He substituted a principle of life.

Jesus made little of the advantages of discipleship. He was full of the thought of its opportunities and obligations. The righteousness of His day was contented by the fulfilment of specific commands. He set a far higher ideal of goodness, the continued manifestation under all circumstances of the spirit of loving obedience to God, and sincere devotion to His service. This is real Christlikeness.

Chapter 16. The Sermon on the Mount: Our Duty to God.

Mt. ch. 6.

Portions of the Sermon on the Mount afford a fine illustration of the appropriate and telling forms with which Jesus was able to clothe His thoughts. He had the art of expressing Himself in phrases which could not be forgotten. The gift of sententious or figurative speech was much prized among the Jews. It was the characteristic accomplishment of the sages of Israel, those who aimed to influence men toward right views of life and conduct. They had to win a hearing in order to exert an influence and, even more than the prophets, they studied the art of beautiful and forceful expression.

It has been said that the actual teaching of Jesus was in the form of brief and concise utterances rather than extended discourses. But Jesus was pre-eminently a preacher and was capable of varying the form of His declarations to suit the purpose before Him. The Gospels preserve many a pithy saying of His, many similitudes and parables and illustrations, each very perfect in its way. They likewise give evidence here and there of His skill in stately, impressive utterance. His eulogy on John the Baptist (Mt. 11:7-19) or His discourse on The Sign of Jonah (Lu. 11:29-32) are striking examples of rhetorical power. The latter half of the fifth chapter of Matthew, beginning with verse 21, exhibits a dignified rhythmic series of antithetical statements which reveal the effectiveness and impressiveness of the discourse of Jesus when He had occasion.

The rhetorical beauty is noticeable also in portions of the sixth chapter. Any careful reader may note three stanzas, relating respectively to almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, each concluding with the refrain, "and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." The addition of the explanatory words about true prayer (vss. 7-15) breaks in upon the poetical sequence but does not destroy it.

After discussing the royal law of life which should be governed by far-reaching principles rather than by exact rules of conduct, the thought of the discourse turns to the maintenance of the spiritual character of worship. The religious leaders of the day—the Pharisees—were ostentatious and theatrical in their religious practice, making a vulgar parade of scrupulousness. Jesus did not censure the extreme care to perform all prescribed duties nor even their prompt performance at the stated time, but the tendency to make a show of piety. Such theatrical virtue does not count in God's sight; He regards only the inner motive of a man. It may be doubted whether even a typical Pharisee actually had a trumpet blown when he was ready to bestow an alms. The phrase in the second verse must be metaphorical. But they were great "actors" and loved to draw large houses to witness their bounty. It was this hateful pride that Jesus condemned. He neither approved nor condemned almsgiving as a habit or duty. The spirit of both the Old Testament and of the New supports it as a privilege over which one need be neither complacent nor self-conscious.

The significance of the second example of Pharisaic practice is exhibited by an acquaintance with the prayer customs of the East. Prayer in the rituals of Jew and Mohammedan alike is reduced to a system, with special petitions at stated intervals, much stress being laid on the exact observance of prescribed times, postures and forms. Men, desirous of a reputation for piety, were apt to plan to be overtaken on the street by the hour of prayer, so that all could see them. But Jesus declared that true prayer should be unostentatious, directed only toward God. He did not think, of course, of excluding social prayer, but rather of urging the spirit of solitude in prayer.

The Lord's prayer was no set form of prayer, to be substituted for the forms which other rabbis taught their followers, but a model to which all prayer may in general conform. It emphasizes by example the reverent freedom which should characterize real prayer, the

trustful spirit it should express and the simplicity of manner it favors. Whether this prayer was wholly original is the least important of questions. It leads us in the right way to God; it expresses our needs and aspirations in simple form; it has no superfluous words. It is a worthy fruitage of the long and varied prayer life of Jesus.

The third example of current piety was the practice of fasting. This, too, the Jews had reduced to a rigid system, often followed mechanically, yet with every evasion which a skilful casuistry could devise. Thus adjusted it ministered mainly to a love of ostentation. To all this Jesus was opposed. He forbade all simulation of sorrow and in fact all pretence of any kind.



**Western Shore of the Sea of Galilee, with the Horns Hattin
Seen in the Distance, through the Gorge of Hamam.**

The section which begins with the nineteenth verse is reproduced by Luke in other connections, but it does not seem out of place. The true righteousness needs to be distinguished from worldliness no less than from spurious types of piety. The ostentation of Pharisaism was no more conspicuous than its spirit of greed. Jesus pointed out the two grave dangers of hoarding: its insecurity and its corrupting influence on the soul. Moreover, no one can have two supreme objects of interest, the one on the earth and the other in heaven. One must be definitely in subordination.

Nor can we be truly religious if we waste our ener-

gies over matters that are of trivial importance. The habit of anxiety is both foolish and useless, foolish because we have a Father in heaven, useless because no amount of worrying will alter the conditions under which we live.

The emphasis placed by Jesus on the fatherhood of God is interesting. The word "father" expresses a relationship of love and sympathy and care. The Father knows the needs of His disciples and never forgets them. He listens to their pleas, He considers their welfare, He ministers to their necessities.

The part of the true disciple is to do day by day his whole duty, aiming to promote in himself and in others an unswerving allegiance to God and to accomplish each day every proper obligation, assured that present duty is all that God wishes any one to perform, and that with the morrow will be provided the grace and wisdom for the full performance of all that is to come. Not lack of forethought but absence of anxious, distrustful solicitude is what our Lord forbade.

The principle of subordination is one which is far reaching. No one can be allied to earth and to heaven at the same time, if each is regarded as supreme in importance. But when one interest is made supreme and all others subordinated, it is clear that the whole world may be utilized. Jesus did not condemn the use of riches, but servility to them.

With God as our Father it follows that there must be sincerity and reality in our religious life. We stand in a close relation which invites and demands genuine affection. Such a relationship places the formal side of religious life in its proper subordination. It is a helpful auxiliary, not a principal aim.

Chapter 17.—The Sermon on the Mount: Applications of the New Law of Righteousness.

Mt. 7: 1—8: 1.

The latter portion of the Sermon on the Mount as given in the Gospel according to Matthew lends support to the suggestion of Bruce that the first Gospel records a skilful combination of originally distinct teachings, possessing a generic unity because of their common environment. The preaching of Jesus at this time might be compared to a summer school of theology. He did not merely meet His disciples and others for a few hours that they might hear one continued discourse, but met them again and again, for days perhaps in succession, going over many themes on which those who were soon to represent Him far and wide needed careful instruction.

A very strong argument can be made for the view that the principal, perhaps the only, subject of the most important of these conferences was Pharisaic righteousness and Christ's position in relation to it. This was a supremely important theme both for Him and for His hearers. Confronted as He was with evidences of Pharisaic disapproval and even hostility it was evident that He should begin at once to make clear to His followers the principles which determined His judgments of Pharisaic practise, and to make it equally plain that His attitude toward the Law and the Prophets was not revolutionary but friendly, and that His supreme desire was the securing of a glad obedience to its genuine, rightfully interpreted precepts.

Throughout the sermon, as reported by the first Gospel, are instructions which relate to other themes of interest to disciples, such as the warnings against covetousness and worry, or the teaching about true prayer. The remaining portion of the sermon, found in Mt. ch. 7, contains some of this miscellaneous material. Whether it was or was not uttered on some other occasion, it seems appropriate to such a gathering, as Bruce has suggested, when a number of helpful themes might

well have been considered, only fragments of the discussions being preserved to us. To understand the Sermon on the Mount as one uninterrupted, single discourse is increasingly difficult; to understand our two versions of it as two distinct attempts to exhibit its great ideas and beautiful teachings, neither more than suggesting the length or the method or the fullness or the charm of the original series of conversations, is increasingly satisfactory.

Jesus could not complete His presentation of the royal law of genuine righteousness without drawing some personal applications. He had to warn His followers against indulging in the very faults which contributed to deaden the spiritual life of the orthodox Jewish leaders. He therefore took up the question of the right use of the standards of conduct to which He had given expression and illustration. Such standards are not in the first place to encourage an attitude of criticism. The habitually censorious person forgets his own failings. Right standards are rather for self-correction and improvement. Only a victory over the evil which is within ourselves can give us the clearness of moral vision which enables us to perceive and the genuine friendliness which enables us to properly deal with the evils which are round about us. Moral criticism is often necessary. There is such a thing as discrimination in character. He who has a holy treasure to guard need not expose it to desecration by the first comer. Holiness has its rights.

The section which urges the disciple to an intelligent persistence in prayer is repeated almost word for word in Lu. 11:1-13 and in a more impressive connection. There it is related that the disciples requested that He teach them to pray. He responded with the Lord's Prayer as a model for all time, and followed with the parable of the Importunate Friend and with the instruction, found in our passage also, that there should be a persistence in trustful, expectant prayer, addressed to a loving Father.

The concluding verse of the section (Mt. 7:12) states a truly golden rule. As Bruce remarks, its positive declaration takes us into the region of generosity or grace. Christ would have us go very much beyond the scope of a *quid pro quo*. He would have us render our helpfulness to those about us in a magnanimous, kindly, happy way. What other one than He would have made each man's desires his own standard of generosity or friendliness to others?

The two ways of life, the narrow and the broad, trodden by the few and the many, entered by narrow and wide gates, seem to emphasize a similar line of thought to that of the teachings about prayer. The entrance into the Christian life is narrow in that it requires a separation from worldliness, and the life itself is straitened because it is beset with difficulties with which every one must manfully struggle. It was too strait for the rich young ruler. To continue in it requires a patient persistence in well doing.

False prophets are a factor to be always reckoned with in religion. They are not readily distinguished from good men by any outward test. As Mt. 7:22 suggests, every such misleader has much to say for himself and to exhibit,—earnest addresses, the casting out of demons, many wonderful works performed. These are all very plausible data. But there is a far-reaching test. The true prophet cares supremely for truth, for his fellowmen, for righteous living, not at all for himself. The false prophet is always a self-seeking man. He never enters into fellowship with Christ. They have nothing in common. His leadership is selfish and narrow, a seizing of opportunities rather than an upbuilding of conditions.

The concluding utterance is a fitting finale of this remarkable group of teachings, unparalleled for dignity, beauty and importance.

The figure used had a significance for His hearers which it does not possess for us. The streams with which they were familiar are in summer time perfectly

dry, but become in the rainy season swollen streams. A far-seeing, careful man, building his home near such a water course, would put it, at some inconvenience, high up on a rock where it would be safe. An inconsiderate man would build at haphazard, on the sand, because that would be in the dry season both convenient and easy. The cultivation of a true religious life is like the building of a home. It calls for the exercise of sound judgment, of serious purpose, of deliberate forethought. Its progress is due to the careful use of appropriate measures. Its security depends upon its foundation.

The one great hindrance to Christian maturity and stability, as Christ viewed it, was self-centredness. This prevents true loyalty to God, genuine sympathy for man, and a free and generous serviceableness. It substitutes pride for a confidence in God's care, and ambition in place of a desire to promote the Divine purposes. It neutralizes the habit of obedience to God's will. It is the one impossible trait of the true follower of Jesus.

Chapter 18.—Jesus' Estimate of John the Baptist.

Lu. 7: 1-35.

It is very evident to one who reads the chapters immediately following those which describe the Sermon on the Mount that the third Gospel rather than the first conveys the correct impression regarding the events which occurred next in order. The Gospel according to Matthew states that Jesus entered Capernaum but proceeds to relate, not the events which happened during His visit, but a series of illustrations of His Galilean ministry of healing, exhibiting His varied and wonderful serviceableness. Luke's Gospel, on the other hand, seems to follow an historical clue, relating several notable and illuminating events of the rapid tour of Galilee which Jesus began in company with His disciples.

At the very outset, as He was entering Capernaum, He was met by a deputation of Jewish elders who besought His favor on behalf of a Roman centurion who was held in high respect by all the people of Capernaum because of His friendliness and sympathy for them. Such considerateness as his was indeed rare, particularly in a Roman officer, trained by heritage and habit to despise the subject races controlled by him. Rarer yet was the solicitude which he showed for the slave who was ill. Jesus was always ready to meet such men and give them encouragement. But in the centurion He found a kindred spirit, a man of insight, strength and large-heartedness. The officer may have known more or less already about Jesus, for he showed an appreciative respect for Him which went far beyond that of Jesus' own following. Recognizing His power and its proper sphere he asked only that Jesus would put it forth on behalf of the lad, just as he himself would exercise his own competent authority. Jesus marvelled at such ready and sympathetic comprehension. It was a gladdening token of the masterful faith which could be readily awakened throughout the Gentile world.

Significant as this episode was, Luke's excellent judg-

ment in the selection of data which would afford a true apprehension of the personality of Jesus is no less wonderful in the story of the bringing to life of the son of the widow of Nain.

It is related with beautiful simplicity, but throws a fresh and distinctive light upon the helpful ministry of Jesus. The band of travelers were on their way and came to the village called Nain.

At the very entrance they met a funeral procession, made peculiarly mournful by the fact that the chief mourner was a widow and the dead man her only son. Touched deeply by her pitiful condition Jesus halted



Nain.



An Eastern Funeral Procession.

the bearers of the bier, restored the dead to life, and gave him back again to his mother. There were many witnesses of the deed, and the report of it went far and wide, preceding Jesus from place to place, and giving Him an open opportunity for reaching men. It was

merely a passing act, but very characteristic. The story is wonderfully well told. In seven verses there is a whole volume. Its greatest value is its testimony to the tender yet strong nature of the Master. He could not

pass by a case of helpless need, but He could break the bars of death by a commanding word.

These were but two of the many helpful deeds which illustrated the glad message of the kingdom which He was proclaiming. Rumors concerning them went everywhere and found their way even to the lonely hero, John the Baptist, in his gloomy prison at Machærus, a fortress which was situated on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. For many weary months, their tedium relieved only by the visits of his own disciples who remained faithful to him, John had been confined there at the command of King Herod. The stern prophet, faithful to his Divine commission, had not hesitated to lay bare the transgressions of the king and his consort, as well as of the various classes of people. The flagrant misdeeds of the royal couple must indeed have gained for them a rebuke both unsparing and unrestricted, for the hatred of Herodias became implacable. She saw to it that John was kept safe in the prison.

No wonder that John could not understand his situation. He would naturally anticipate some action on the part of Jesus in his behalf. He was expecting, no doubt, that the Messiah would at no distant date declare Himself, depose Herod and his minions, drive away the hated Romans and set up the long-expected kingdom of righteousness and brotherhood, purging the people of those who were Israelites only in name, unworthy of the kingdom, and freeing them from all hindrances to growth. But the reports which came to his ears were suggestive of quite another outcome. They indicated that Jesus was a good man and one out of the ordinary, but that He was giving no sign whatever of an intention to fulfil the confident predictions of his forerunner.

Perplexed and disappointed the great-hearted man of God did exactly what he would be expected to do. He sent two trusted disciples to Jesus to appeal to Him for an explanation. They were to ask Him frankly whether He was the expected Messiah or not.

Jesus understood John and took the simplest method of satisfying his doubts. He allowed the messengers to watch Him as He spent a busy day in works of beneficence and helpfulness, and then bade them describe to their master in prophetic language what they had seen. It was a satisfying reply. It virtually declared that Jesus was doing precisely what the prophets had said that the Messiah would do. His life was no failure, but a glorious success. Happy the man who could see this and enter into glad fellowship with Him!

On the departure of the messengers with their cheering message, Jesus seized the opportunity to pay a public tribute to John. What had been the popular estimate of the prophet of the Jordan? No weakling was he, no truckler, but one who declared the will of God, the equal of the prophets of Israel and more, the herald of the true Messiah. Yet this greatest of prophets was not the equal of a humble disciple of Jesus, since the latter habitually acted upon truth which no prophet had comprehended.

The doom of that generation was sealed because its leaders would not even receive the message of John. They played at religion, scoffing alike at the ascetic prophet and the friendly Jesus, letting their prejudices control their impressions. God's glorious revelation could not be made plain to such a people.

The question of Jesus to the multitudes is a practical one for every age. It is the business of every intelligent person to cultivate a clear vision. He should actually see the things which ought to be seen that he may take an intelligent and worthy share in the forward movements of the world. No one has a right to trifle like a child with the great realities of life.

The penalties of narrow-mindedness are not averted by goodness of character or by greatness of service. The prophet himself, the last and greatest of his kind, was yet, by the very characteristics which made him notable and useful, debarred from the larger life of the coming kingdom.

Chapter 19—Pharisaic Calumny and Narrowness Rebuked.

Mk. 3: 19b-35; Lu. 7: 36—8: 3.

The second preaching circuit of Jesus in Galilee was a somewhat undefined tour, rather a series of excursions from Capernaum as a base than a continuous and carefully planned journey. The Gospels give no itinerary and rather ignore the journey itself. They emphasize the work which Jesus was doing and the current explanations regarding it.

Apparently the popularity of Jesus did not seriously wane. Crowds flocked to Him wherever He went. In Capernaum He was besieged by so dense and engrossing a throng that neither He nor His disciples could attend to their normal needs. They were simply overwhelmed by the eager rush of the people. This popularity did not deceive Jesus nor did it elate Him, but He took quick advantage of it, doing His utmost to seize this splendid opportunity for impressing Himself upon those who were within the reach of His hand and the sound of His voice.

It has often been pointed out that only an actual and successful ministry of healing would have led to the formulation of theories of explanation. Had Jesus performed no wonderful cures there would have been neither crowds nor criticisms. But His friends and His enemies, the people and their ruler—each had a theory which emphasized the fact explained.

His friends and relatives were convinced that He had gone mad. They did not disapprove of His work, but felt that He had carried serviceableness to an extreme, reaching at least an unhealthy stage of excitement, dangerous alike to health and happiness. Fearing that He would be unable to continue the strain, they came to Capernaum to remove Him to a more quiet environment. They felt that He lacked all prudence and was over-careless about Himself. They viewed His work from a selfish standpoint, and with little appreciation of its significance. Therefore He recognized the broader

claims of true spiritual kinship. If His own family could not enter with sympathy into His work, He could find among His followers those who would take their places. This was a "hard saying" in a land of strong family ties. Probably it confirmed the opinion of His relatives that He was in a morbid state of mind.

The hostile scribes claimed publicly that He was in collusion with Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. His whole course would show this, they thought, but His power to order the demons about testified to it anew. This was a serious charge, coming from those to whom the people were accustomed to look for authoritative decisions, and assuming conditions difficult to disprove but accepted as real by every auditor. Jesus met it in the only effective way. He reduced it to absurdity by drawing a few analogies. How, He suggested, could the great ruler of the demons lend his aid for their discomfiture, thus working against his own interests? Jesus was deliberately invading Satan's sphere and delivering men from bondage to him and all for which he stood. Such rejoinder was a delight to Jesus. He could meet His adversaries on their own ground and foil them with their own weapons. No scribe was ever able to equal Him in dialectic.

The meanness of the calumny aroused His indignation and its insincerity led Him to administer a solemn rebuke. He warned them against becoming guilty of an eternal sin in blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. By this He must have meant their deliberately malignant ascription of His gracious deeds of love to the influence of the evil one. Such calculating fiendishness may get beyond the power of redeeming love.

The common people did not understand Jesus as He desired to be known, but they had come to one conclusion with unanimity. Jesus was a man to tie to and follow in case of need. He could help them and was ready at much personal cost, but in kindest fashion, to do it. How He cured them and their friends or why did not greatly concern them. It was enough that

many were made whole and relieved of blindness and insanity and epilepsy and palsy and many other current forms of disease, and even brought back from death unto life.

The number on whom He could rely grew steadily larger. There accompanied Him on His tours not only the Twelve but many others only less trusted than they. This body of faithful disciples included a few women bound to Him by ties of gratitude and reverence. Mary of Magdala, unfortunately and no doubt unjustly fated to be reputed as one redeemed from a life of sin, but unquestionably a noble woman delivered by Jesus from daily martyrdom; the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, a woman of means, and others were His companions, deeming it a sacred pleasure to contribute of their means toward the support of the disciples. To Jesus, as to other teachers among the Jews, this problem must at times have been perplexing. It was commonly solved by the generosity of well-to-do followers, who esteemed it a privilege to assist in the maintenance of what contributed to their beloved Master's influence. That He not only allowed these women to perform this duty but associated them with the disciple company was a wide departure from the conventional standards of Rabbinic practice, but in full accordance with His generous and thoughtful policy.

His friendliness to all finds striking illustration in the story, told so graphically in Luke's Gospel, of the meal in the house of Simon, the Pharisee. While Pharisees as a class were in an attitude of hostility to Jesus, there were some who inclined to believe in Him and many who, with more or less condescension, sought to hear Him present His own side of the truth. Simon appears to have invited Jesus to his house in order that he and his friends might hear Him without disturbance or interruption. He treated Jesus as a curiosity rather than as a guest, omitting the customary courtesies shown to his friends. Nevertheless the meal went on as intended, until a strange incident occurred. A

woman, who for some reason was not permitted to enter the synagogue, probably because of her impure life, stole in quietly, placed herself at the outstretched, unsandaled feet of the Master, anointed them with costly ointment, and bathed them with yet more precious tears of loving repentance. Somewhere Jesus had spoken to her sinful heart and manifested a sympathy and en-



Ancient Couch Table.

couragement which made for her redemption. She could not refrain from this silent testimony of her gratitude and her purpose. Jesus, she well knew, would understand her. With His approval she could brave the merciless disapproval of the Pharisees.

The delicacy with which Jesus dealt with her and His universal courtesy did not prevent Him from holding up a mirror for Simon. He was taught that forgiveness should keep pace with bitter need, and that a true love for men takes account of nothing else.

The attitude of Jesus toward those whom He met at this time of whatever class is a continuous inspiration to His followers in their contact with life. The misapprehensions of others made no difference with Him. He continued to give His best.

But He occasionally drew a line. A personal wrong He ignored; a spiritual crime—the forbidding of the free course of saving grace—He denounced. In this too He set a permanent example.

Chapter 20.—The Parables of the Kingdom.

Mt. 13: 1-50; Mk. 4: 26-29.

The attentive reader of the Gospels will note with surprise the fact that the Synoptists seem to testify that Jesus at this period of His ministry began to emphasize the use of parables in His teaching. It does not follow that He had made no previous use of this effective educational instrument, but only that there was a reason for its more constant and striking use.

The use of all forms of imagery in discourse was common among the Jewish teachers of that day. They delighted in riddles and fables, in stories and illustrations, in curious and impressive methods of presenting truth, which met with great acceptance on the part of the people. Jesus was a master of the art of imaginative expression. From the outset His illustrations made a deep impression upon His audiences. His figurative expressions were singularly apt and forceful. "I will make you fishers of men." "Ye are the salt of the earth, the light of the world." "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." According to His recorded addresses He made constant use of more elaborate imagery, not alone of the parable but of allegory.

His use of the parable in teaching truth is made evident by the Gospels. Apparently more than one reason made this a favorite method of instruction. One great value of the parable is the ease with which it is retained in memory. But it likewise attracts the hearer and makes him ready to listen to truth. It also presents the essential truth in a forceful way, reserving the unwelcome conclusion for the hearer himself.

It follows that a parable must not be over-interpreted. It is intended to convey one principal teaching, not a dozen. An allegory, like that of the Good Shepherd, or the Vine and the Branches, must be significant in details in order to be most effective; a parable, like that

of the Rich Man and Lazarus, is evidence that the minor details are but an effective setting to the real teaching intended.

One is tempted to conclude from the apparent statements of the Gospels that Jesus made use of parables in order to prevent men from getting at truth. "To them it is not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." In a certain sense it is true that the real meaning of a parable might be obscure to one who was wholly unspiritual in temperament and not in sympathy with the purposes of Jesus. There were always a large number of auditors—possibly a majority—whose ears were attentive to the story and to nothing more, but that Jesus deliberately sought to withhold the truth from any one seems incredible. The real purpose of a parable is to set forth a spiritual truth in effective fashion, to give it wings, to insure its life, to make it unforgettable. Incidentally it furnished entertainment of a favorite sort.

The grouping in the first Gospel of eight parables, as if all were delivered on this one occasion, serves to impress the reader with their significance. It is quite possible that several of them were actually spoken on other occasions, and equally possible that more than eight were delivered at this time. The parallel passage in Mark includes two of these parables and one new one. The Gospel of Luke gives only the parable of the Sower in this connection, assigning another occasion for those of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven. Doubtless Jesus often used these parables of the kingdom, so fitting and helpful for His purpose.

The student of these parables is constantly impressed by the felicity with which Jesus made use of them and the importance of the teaching thus conveyed. Among the religious teachers of the world who have adopted and made their own historic methods sanctioned by antiquity and popular approval He stands foremost. Other teachers could pray and could teach their disciples to pray, yet there is really no prayer which com-

parees with His own. Others were noted for the depth and charm of their teachings, but Jesus was easily the Master of all.

Bruce remarks that the parables of the Sower and of the Tares and the Drag Net belong together. The first explains the fact that men are so variously affected by even the most earnest preaching. There are all sorts of hearers, some of whom are no more impressible than soil that is strewn with rocks. The second and third indicate that the kingdom could not begin by sorting out its own people and excluding the rest. The time for sorting comes at the end of a fishing, not before. The growth of the kingdom is a long historical process.

The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven explain themselves. The kingdom of heaven is sure to keep growing, silently, surprisingly, beneficently. Give it time.

The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price are perfect illustrations of the supreme value of the kingdom. One who knows about spiritual values will make any sacrifice whatever to insure his possession of this greatest good.

The parable of the Householder is supplemental to those preceding. Jesus would have His disciples fresh-minded, un-Rabbinical, reverent toward familiar truth, open to that which is new, loyal always to the preaching of truth.

One who considers the parables in the light of the circumstances of the active ministry of Jesus realizes that they may have been utilized by Him at this particular crisis as an apology and as an efficient method of presentation. Some explanation of the situation was needed in order that the disciples might not lose heart. They as well as He could see that His cause was making but slight progress. The king on his throne, the religious leaders, His own family, the people at large—with one accord failed to take Him at His own estimate. He had to remind them of the working conditions of such

an enterprise as His and to encourage them by an assurance of future results.

To a certain extent the emphasis laid by Him on this form of teaching may have been due to the evident misapprehension of His plainer declarations. There was a real advantage in the employment of natural and familiar analogies in nature and life for the explanation of His conception of the kingdom and its future.

Neither self-defense nor the exigencies of instruction, however, account in full for parables. They were as natural to Jesus as the habit of prayer, the spontaneous expression of His genial, healthful, clear-visioned personality. The Christian of to-day can ill afford to ignore the parable habit. It is helpful to the teacher who desires to cultivate the art of putting ideas in attractive forms, which cannot be readily dropped out of mind. It is indispensable for the disciple who faces the hard facts of daily life. The parable habit will transform and illumine and interpret the most prosaic happenings into inspiring contributions to the progress of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 21.—The Commanding Personality of Jesus.

Mk. 4:35—5:20.

The solicitude of the family of Jesus in regard to His physical well-being was not wholly misplaced. Occasionally Jesus Himself found it needful to slip away from the constant pressure of the multitude for whose relief He was incessantly importuned. To preserve that serene balance of mind which characterized Him He sought a few hours of privacy with His intimates. Only thus could He maintain His own vitality and courage and replenish theirs.

After the day or days of instruction and healing in Capernaum He found Himself at the shore of the lake, and on an impulse which may have been sudden proposed to His disciples that they go over to the other side. Matthew's Gospel alone suggests the pressure of the multitude as a motive; but the others imply it more or less distinctly. His companions were ready to go. These brief periods of absence invariably were times of instruction. Jesus rarely failed to exhibit Himself in some new phase of character, which strengthened their confidence in Him or broadened their vision.

Mark indicates the quickness of the disciples' response to the suggestion of the Master. Even so it was not possible to go unattended. Some of His auditors had gotten into the boats which were at the shore, and lost no time in following the Rabbi who had impressed Himself so powerfully upon them. These may have been witnesses to the remarkable events which took place or they may have merely escorted Him for a distance, returning in the face of the rising tempest.

As they proceeded a storm arose in sudden, fierce gusts, rolling up great waves which broke over the boat and were rapidly filling it with water. Overcome by fatigue Jesus had fallen asleep on the rough leathern cushion which served for the steersman. Through all the disturbance of the elements and plunging of the

vessel He slept soundly. At last, overmastered by alarm, the others in the boat wakened the Master and besought Him to save them. Since four of them were fishermen by occupation, accustomed to handle boats and acquainted with the lake, the situation must have seemed really perilous.

The narrative of Mark is intensely dramatic. It conveys an impression of the raging storm and the threatening waves and of the calmness and majestic assertiveness of Jesus. Its parallelism gives an effect of stateliness which is unique. He addresses separately the wind and the sea and they each obey.

Marvellous as the outcome seemed to them, it was more than a lesson of the resourcefulness and dominance of Jesus. His self-mastery and absolute confidence was the chief impression. The disciples were ever being astonished and awed by Him. Their education had to proceed one step at a time, each advance making a serious demand upon their loyalty. Even Jesus could scarcely realize their slowness of apprehension. His rebuke seems to contain a note of sorrowful surprise. Could they not be courageous as long as He was near at hand? Had He not even yet won their unswerving confidence?

At the further shore a no less convincing demonstration of His power took place, related in the second Gospel with extreme realism and graphic power. The party landed on heathen territory in the region known as the Decapolis, a league of Greek cities dating back as far as the time of Pompey. Some city (Mk. 5:14) was not far away, but the spot where they landed was apparently wild, hilly and rather desolate. Perhaps the name of the town near by was Khersa, whose territory probably bordered on the north with that of Bethsaida. That the people were Greek in habits may be argued from the vast herd of swine which was plainly in sight.

Here they were met at once by a man who was violently insane. He was unclothed, uncanny, a constant wanderer, possessed as all believed by a host of evil

spirits. Day and night he roamed, screaming in his frenzy and cutting himself with stones, a terror to all who lived in the vicinity, wholly uncontrollable. Rushing, as was his wont, to meet the intruders the maniac



Hill of the Swine near Gerasa, or Khersa.
(Copyright, 1898, by A. J. Holman & Co., Philadelphia.)

was arrested and mastered at once by the calm, strong personality of Jesus. One feature of his twisted consciousness was the sense of possession by unnumbered demons, and of being subject to their will. The spiritual masterfulness of Jesus was adequate for

the restoration of the poor sufferer to his proper balance of mind.

The three outstanding facts in this case with reference to which all testimonies agree are the seriousness of his condition, the completeness of his cure and the destruction, in close connection with the cure, of the great herd of swine which was feeding near at hand. To those who were witnesses the explanation of the case was simple. The demons who were in the man entered into the swine and caused the catastrophe. How a trained observer of to-day would have explained the circumstances no one can declare. We can readily imagine a series of paroxysms on the part of the madman which affected the herd with extreme terror. The whole countryside came flocking to the scene of the catastrophe. They wondered when they saw the demoniac in his right mind, but they were unwilling to have the work continued at such a price. They besought the Master to go away.

The man who was healed desired to follow Jesus. But the Master bade him rather give his redeemed life to glad and thankful service as the first apostle to the non-

Jewish world. It is not certain that he accomplished great things. There was a passing wonder at his testimony, possibly a determination on the part of many to see Jesus, if the opportunity came,—little more.

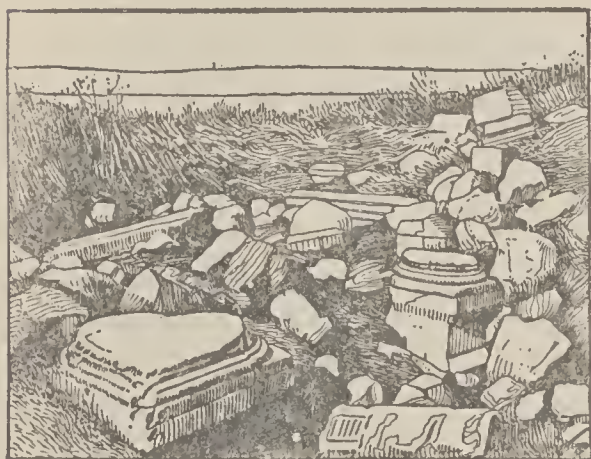
Demoniac possession is one of the unsolved mysteries of the Gospel tradition. Beyond question the people of Judea and Galilee believed in its reality and distinguished it often from physical disease. The two principal reasons for regarding a demoniac as more than merely an insane person are their characteristic recognition of Jesus as the Messiah and His apparent acceptance of the popular view that they were possessed. He said in the case of the man of Gadara, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." The first reason may be explained by the prevailing Messianic ardor, sure to affect unbalanced minds. Jesus did not value their testimony. The second reason is truly perplexing, but only because we hesitate to suppose that He would allow His disciples to cherish an error. The certain truth is that whether the disease was mental or spiritual, and its subject responsible or irresponsible, Jesus was its Master. A moment in His presence was sufficient to give the victim a self-mastery. Fellowship with Him was then, as now, the secret of its maintenance.

The people of Gadara we profoundly pity. Because of losing a little property they forfeited the greatest opportunity of their lives. It is an outstanding mystery that men will witness the triumphs of the Gospel and yet continue to ignore its claims.

Chapter 22.—The Power of Faith.

Mt. 9:27-34; Mk. 5:21-43.

Apparently Jesus did not remain long among the inhospitable people of the Gadarene country. He returned, according to the first Gospel, to Capernaum, where the multitude was expectant and ready to give Him a welcome. Before He had left the seaside He was approached by the ruler of the local synagogue, Jairus by name, a man of much influence, who was entrusted with the care of public worship, appointing readers and preachers. Usually

**Ruins of Synagogue at Tell Hum.**

One of the traditional sites of Capernaum.

there was only one such official at a synagogue. Mark recognizes him as belonging to that class.

Jairus, overcome by grief, hearing of the coming of Jesus, hastened from the chamber of death to importune Jesus to lend His aid and restore her, before it

should be too late. The Master could not resist such an earnest appeal with its note of faith. He followed him with the disciples.

Jesus was closely pressed by a great crowd who hoped to witness a miracle. In this throng was a woman, who for twelve years had suffered grievously from a malady which no one had been able to cure. In Christian tradition her name was Veronica. Her sickness made her Levitically unclean and she did not wish to call public attention to it, so she came behind Jesus and touched the tassel or border of His overgarment, thinking that even such a contact with Him would heal her. Though a superstitious act, it was her best and most natural expression of confidence in Jesus.

We can well imagine the timidity and tentativeness with which she approached the Master to make the trial. She had endured every phase of shame and agony for years. Not alone her resources, but her courage were almost expended. Her need was so desperate that she dared to press it on this inappropriate occasion, when Jesus was hurrying on an errand of life and death to the house of the ruler.

Then came the great wonder. In a moment she felt that her complaint was healed, that her time of distress was over. She stepped away but not out of earshot. Jesus at once knew that some one had touched Him and asked who it was. Despite the natural astonishment of His disciples He persisted in declaring that some one had been healed.

The woman could not longer keep her secret. "It occurred to her that she might have been doing something terribly wrong in obtaining her great blessing from the Healer in this strange way." Trembling with fear she cast herself at His feet and confessed her daring deed. With infinite tact and delicacy Jesus addressed her as "daughter," a soothing, considerate, tender, reassuring word. It expressed forgiveness, comprehension and comfort—all in one. He then commended her faith and graciously dismissed her in peace.

Mark's lively narrative enables us to follow the course of Jesus to the house of the ruler. While on his way Jairus was told that the child had expired. Jesus overheard the message and encouraged him to hold on to his faith.

Why Jesus selected Peter, James and John to go with Him has been variously explained. Probably the Twelve would have been too many and yet these could represent them as eye-witnesses. Probably also there was a sympathy between these three and the Master which made them particularly agreeable as companions. There were hopes and thoughts in the mind of Jesus which could scarcely be confided to the entire group of apostles. He was the Teacher and Guide of them all, but

the intimate friend of a few. His preference awakened some jealousy, yet was persistent. Jesus found in the three, especially in Peter and John, a responsiveness, a readiness of comprehension and a comradeship which were of great support to Him and more or less essential to His own balance of judgment and persistency of purpose. Not even the Master loved to stand alone continually. At the more important occasions of His ministry He took the three with Him.

Coming to the ruler's house Jesus found there already a throng of people, relatives, friends, mourners and onlookers, drawn by various motives, sympathy, the desire to share in the good things going at the funeral, and professional zeal. The funeral of a member of the family of one of the leading citizens of Capernaum would call for the prompt attendance or the representation of every one of social standing in the city. It would afford an open opportunity for many of less importance to show their sympathy or interest. It demanded the presence of every relative of whatever degree. Besides those who prepared the body for the last rites, the mourning customs of the day—as ancient as the days of Jeremiah (Jer. 9:17, 18)—required the attendance of flute players and professional mourners. The latter sang elegies of a peculiar metre and style in praise of the dead. If we may cite in illustration the custom of the farther East as witnessed to-day, these mourning songs, while inflexible as to form and melody, were endlessly varied in sentiment, not infrequently made to order.

As befitted the great occasion and the suddenness with which it had become necessary, there was great confusion when Jesus arrived. Manufactured feeling of any kind was intensely distasteful to Him and grief above all others. He quickly dismissed the whole throng, declaring that the maiden was not dead but sleeping. Naturally they laughed derisively, for she was to all seeming beyond the reach of any healing touch. The Master's air of authoritative confidence

prevailed with all. Taking only the parents of the maiden and His trusted Three He entered the chamber of death.

Three details of His action at the bedside are of permanent interest. Notwithstanding the strict ceremonial law in regard to the defilement occasioned by touching a corpse He took the maiden by the hand. The law had to yield to grace where the two came into collision in His work for the world. Again He spoke to her in the current vernacular, Aramaic. Probably He was also a user of Greek; but at such a time as this, He used the home speech. Finally His thoughtfulness in little details is exhibited by the injunction to give her some nourishing food after her long exhaustion. The parents in their overwhelming joy, which must have been manifesting itself in endearments and expressions of thankfulness, might well have forgotten her need. But Jesus had a wonderful stock of common sense.

There is a valuable lesson in His wise command. He had restored the maid to her world. It was not that she might henceforth live apart from others, but that the old ties and habits and responsibilities might be renewed. There was no such idea in the mind of Jesus as a life which ignores relationships and duties.

That nowhere Jesus is made to express a sense of dependence on God for the power which He had been exhibiting does not of course alter the fact of His conscious and constant appeal. His source of strength was the Father.

Chapter 23.—The Mission of the Twelve.

Mt. 9:35—11:1; Mk. 6:1-13.

Following the incidents at Capernaum Jesus and His little company seem to have begun a tour of considerable duration among the villages of Galilee. Of its details we are told but few. He visited Nazareth, He did His usual varied work of preaching, teaching and healing in many other villages; He was so impressed with the conditions He found that He formed the important resolution of sending forth the Twelve to supplement His own activity.

From what motives He made His way to Nazareth we can only conjecture. He could hardly have expected real sympathy and encouragement in the face of the recent action of His own family circle. But doubtless when in that vicinity the spell of His boyhood village asserted itself and He went for a day or two of refreshing rest amidst its familiar scenes.

Whether it was His second visit to Nazareth or His first depends upon the interpretation given to the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. There are many who regard both narratives as referring to the one visit which took place during this second Galilean tour. In such case Luke made use of the incident as a pertinent illustration of a synagogue sermon, such as Jesus was constantly delivering. He thought it a fitting introduction to his story of the active ministry of Jesus, and reproduced it in that connection.

It was natural for Him to make His way to the synagogue on the Sabbath, nor would He refrain from preaching the message with which His heart was full. Taken unawares, His neighbors paid spontaneous tribute to His gracious and winning speech, so fine a realization of their secret hopes for the nation. On reflection, however, they began to discuss the wonderful difference between the eloquent and noble rabbi who had just come to them and the boy who had grown up obscurely in their midst. They quickly reached the

stages of contemptuous rejection of His appeals and of desiring to be rid of Him. They could not overlook His quiet, uneventful, unimposing growth to manhood, devoid of all pretense of leadership or unusual power.

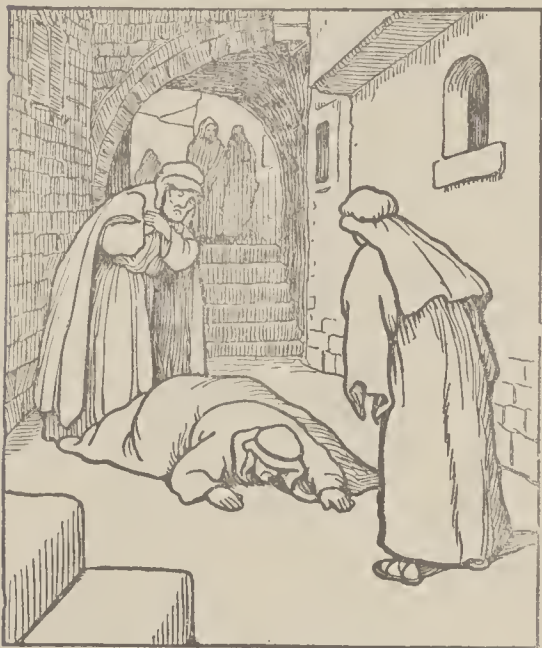
Their attitude was at least a first-rate bit of evidence that His was an extraordinary personality. Their contempt was clearly born of jealousy, their lack of faith a deliberate resistance of impulse. No wonder Jesus marveled. He had occasion sometimes to be annoyed at the manifestation of faith; in this case He wondered at their stupid lack of comprehension.

As the tour continued Jesus was deeply impressed by the religious need of His countrymen. It was indeed bitter. Not only were they spiritually distressed, but their natural leaders showed them only neglect. The Pharisees of that day as a class were thinking about themselves rather than the people. His mood of interest and sympathy passed quickly into one of active purpose to help. He could not long remain a mere observer, for He had nothing of the cynical about Him. He turned with a note of appeal to His disciples, and pointed out the tremendous opportunity exhibited by this obvious need. Laborers of a sort were to be found in this potential harvest field, but effective workers were scarce enough, and many more were needed.

The situation called for a rapid evangelization of the province in order that every one should hear the gladdening Gospel message. Hence the Twelve were sent forth, two and two. Mistakes they might make and their impress would be but partial, yet they would follow His methods and inculcate His spirit.

The instructions given by Jesus speak in the main for themselves, but justify some especial comment. The charge, found only in Matthew, to avoid Gentile and Samaritan cities, was not surprising in view of the facts: there was as yet an open field for effective effort in Galilee and the disciples were hardly fitted to cope with unfamiliar conditions. The great purpose of their mission was to be the moral and spiritual stimulus of

the people. They were to preach and teach continually, but also to heal as opportunity offered. They were to avoid unnecessary elaborateness of outfit or mere display



Oriental Salutations.

that their journey might be rapid and their spirit of friendliness have its full appeal. They were to use their good judgment in selecting the environment of their mission in each village, but not to waste time in enforcing that judgment.

Mt. 10:40-42 may well be regarded as a part of the instructions to the Twelve at this time, but it is evident that verses 16-39 belong to some later instructions,

which contemplated the apostolic age and its trials. The people of Galilee were not as yet in the attitude of "wolves," nor had the time yet come for persecutions of those who spread abroad the message of the kingdom. Those fiery trials, when they came, were such as to test severely the courage and constancy of each apostle. They needed just such forecasts of what they would have to go through, and such assurances of divine support, but not until long contact with Jesus and some experience in the blessedness of a successful ministry had given them a confidence which would defy opposition. The insertion of these instructions for the later age at this time is another illustration of the fondness of the first Gospel for grouping similar material.

While the disciples were away on this mission Jesus Himself continued His own work, avoiding those villages where His disciples had been or were going,

giving them, as one has expressed it, "room and time." For some time this evangelization continued, everywhere finding a response.

Disciples need to be placed in commission every day of the year, and these instructions have lost none of their pertinence or value with the lapse of centuries. The subordination of all personal interests to those of prompt and effective achievement of the object in view, the warning against over-requirement, the injunction to observe a thoughtful and generous courtesy even when engaged upon a great mission, are fundamentally vital to such as would serve their generation.

Ambassadors for Christ must have a great drawing toward the rescue of men from conditions which belittle and ruin their lives. They will count the cost of service and enter upon it cheerfully. They can to-day have, as did the Twelve, the helpful consciousness of the abiding interest and support of the Master.

Chapter 24.—The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

Mk. 6:14-46; Jo. 6:1-15.

The evangelizing work of the Twelve in all parts of Galilee spread far and wide a knowledge of Jesus, the wonderful Teacher and Healer. Even Herod in his palace heard rumors concerning the young Rabbi and His bold message of righteousness and the kingdom of God, and wondered if John the Baptist had not risen from the dead to confront him once more.

There was reason for his query. Not long before, that noble man of God had been beheaded at his order. For many months he had been languishing in prison for stigmatizing the adulterous relations of Herod with Herodias as they deserved. The king, bad as he was, feared and revered the Baptist. His consort nursed a sleepless hatred of her plain-spoken critic, and found

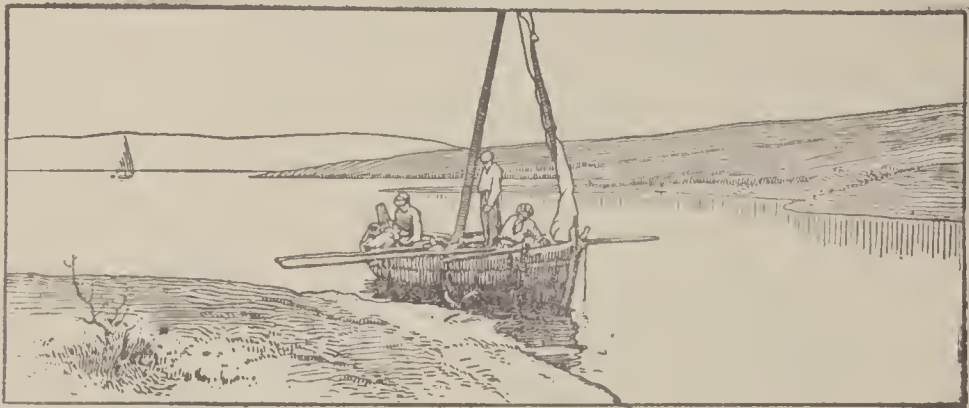
her opportunity for revenge at a banquet given by Herod to his officers of state on his birthday. Her beautiful daughter so excited his guests by her graceful dancing that the king in his drunken joy asked her to name her reward. He dared not break his oath when she asked for the head of the prophet.

Thus ended the earthly career of a noble personality, in the early strength of manhood. An uncompromising witness to the truth he saw, forgetful of self, he made a deep impression on his generation. Consequently his work was not cut short. By his death he accomplished more than by his life. It was a forceful and lasting testimony to loyalty to ideals. Twenty years later there were active disciples of his at Ephesus, who had not been brought into that contact with the apostolic work which usually resulted in their becoming merged with the followers of Jesus. These men, like Apollos (Acts 18:24, 25) were still faithful to the teachings of John, but they readily accepted the ministrations of Paul.

John's work had been limited but was of the highest usefulness. He linked the older age with that which was dawning. He created a confidence in the mission of Jesus that was indispensable for its effective beginning. He made a deep impression by his own personality upon the earnest-minded of his generation, both enlightening and stimulating in itself and transferred in large measure to his greater Master.

The disciples of John hastened to carry the sad news to Jesus. At about the same time the Twelve returned to Him, to report their work. Jesus at once proposed that they all retire to some secluded place for a restful interchange of experiences. That fear of Herod was an important factor in His movements seems unlikely, nevertheless it may have been wise to go beyond His immediate reach. According to Lu. 9:9 the king's emissaries were seeking for Jesus. A sufficient motive for the withdrawal was the desirableness of an escape from the insistent multitude which gave Him no peace.

Bethsaida was a village on the east bank of the Jordan and near the mouth of the river. It was out of Herod's jurisdiction. Thither Jesus sailed, intending, doubtless, to find a quiet spot in its vicinity which was quite uninhabited. But He reckoned without the enthusiasm and energy of the people whom He left behind. They could not bear to lose sight of Him again. Fol-



Entrance of the River Jordan into the Sea of Galilee, Showing the Landing-place near Bethsaida Julias.

(From "Leeper photographs," copyright, 1902. Courtesy of Hammond Publishing Co., Milwaukee.)

lowing the course of His boat they ran along the shore, forded the Jordan, and actually reached the place of disembarkation before He did.

Such earnestness never failed to draw a response from Jesus and to prevent any expression of reproof on His part. Wearied as they all were and desirous of being by themselves, He heartily welcomed the great multitude, constantly growing as the people flocked to His presence, and discoursed with His wonted enthusiasm and attractiveness concerning the kingdom.

The fascination of His teaching and the interruptions made by the many cases of healing caused the day to wear away unnoted. As the evening shadows began to fall the disciples begged him to disperse the throng that the people might depart to the villages for food and shelter. According to the record it was about passover time, so that many Galilean pilgrims were on their way to Jerusalem. These were more than ready to delay at

Capernaum, in order to see and hear the noted Rabbi of whom they had heard so much.

There is no reason for looking upon the act of Jesus as obligatory. His disciples took a perfectly reasonable view of the situation. Wayfarers in the Orient are well able to take care of themselves, and doubtless the groups of people that followed Him up expected to do so. But the Master had a duty to Himself. He was the soul of generous friendliness, which loved to express itself in active hospitality. He was naturally true to the traditions of the East, which honor the lavish and ungrudging exercise of hospitable opportunity and regard it as an exhibition of fine character. Wholly in keeping with these was His remark, "Give ye them to eat."

No wonder the disciples stood aghast. The Master had never used His power for such emergencies, except perhaps at Cana, and they did not rely upon it. Their resources seemed woefully inadequate for feeding even a small part of those who stood watching them.

But their confidence in Jesus was as unfailing as His in the bounty and power of God. When He told them to find out how much provision was at hand, and then gave directions for seating the people in orderly fashion so as to be readily served, they rendered prompt and unquestioning obedience. Mark's Gospel contributes a picturesque hint of the green grass on which the bright colored garments of each company gave the effect of garden beds dotted with flowers.

All accounts agree in describing an actual feeding of the great multitude with five loaves of bread and two fishes, after which there were twelve baskets of fragments remaining. All mention His taking the scanty supply of food, His looking up to heaven, the asking the blessing of God, the breaking of the food, its distribution in unstinted quantity to the disciples, who in turn bore it to the waiting throng, and, finally, the direction to avoid all waste. There can be no doubt that the Gospel writers intended to describe an actual miracle, and that it is as well attested as such an event

ever could be. The miracle itself is confessedly mysterious. No one can imagine how the food could be multiplied while passing through the hands of Jesus, but so it was. To those who explain the feeding of the multitude as an outburst of generosity kindled among the by-standers by the example of Jesus, it may be asked how then could He have been hailed as the Messiah. If He were the sudden source of supply this enthusiasm is intelligible; the people believed that He could fulfil their Messianic anticipations. They went wild with excitement and determined to carry Him off with them to Jerusalem as King. So He slipped away out of their sight and reach.

Mere enthusiasm is an unreliable basis for building up any permanently good cause. Jesus had a real esteem for John the Baptist, although he was a critical friend, because he had convictions and acted upon them. The multitudes had no convictions, only a sentiment, aroused by a remarkable exhibition of generous and friendly power.

Chapter 25.—The Crisis Faced at Capernaum.

Mt. 14:24-36; Jo. 6:22-71.

According to the Synoptic narrative of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus bade His disciples enter their boat and precede Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the multitude. With reluctance they left Him, for they were doubtless as excited as the thousands to whom they had ministered in His name. The people, according to the fourth Gospel, could not contain themselves. Convinced by the manifestation of the day that He was the long-expected Messiah, they were eager to do Him homage and accept His leadership. Not a few of them may have belonged to that body of thorough-going patriots known as "zealots," who were ever ready for deeds of heroic violence. Regarding His reserve as an impracticable modesty, they were meditating how to

force Him to come out openly and assume His rightful place. But divining their intention, Jesus slipped away out of their sight, leaving them to make their way disconsolately back to the city whence the most of them had come.

Solitude was never loneliness to Jesus. It was impossible that He could be really lonely. At one moment only of His life did He betray a passing sense of isolation. Solitude was His opportunity for free communion with the heavenly Father. By such withdrawals for a night of earnest prayer He kept Himself strong and clear in purpose. Anticipating the crucial importance of His next contact with the populace, and perhaps fearing that He might be overtempted to yield to their persuasions, so natural and attractive, He went up onto the mountain, partly to avoid an immediate outburst of popular enthusiasm, but in large part in order to prepare in God's immediate presence to face the impending crisis, the serious nature of which no one realized more clearly than He.

Meanwhile the disciples had been making their way toward Bethsaida. Not a few authorities to-day are inclined to question whether there was a city of this name situated close to Capernaum and on the western shore. At least it is not impossible to explain the events of this night with relation to the Bethsaida Julias which was situated near the mouth of the Jordan. The feeding of the five thousand took place in the level and fertile plain called the Buteiha, perhaps at its lower end. The disciples had no great distance to traverse, merely the length of the plain. But the wind which suddenly arose was squarely against them and beat them back, increasing both the time and the length of the voyage. All night they battled with the tempest until the approaching dawn found them sorely distressed. Just at this time, when their need was greatest, the Master appeared. He seemed to be passing them by, and at first they were afraid rather than comforted. But when His loved voice was heard in

words of encouragement their fears were stilled. According to the fourth Gospel there was a revulsion of feeling. They joyfully welcomed Him into the boat and soon were at their destination. The first Gospel adds to this narrative the episode of Peter's attempt to walk upon the water. It is a characteristic anecdote. As Bruce says, it exhibits his mingled "strength and weakness, bravery and cowardice, generous impulses rather than firm, constant will," a man capable of achieving great things while at fault in little ones.

Apparently the voyage was resumed, for their next stopping place was the district of Gennesaret, a little south of Capernaum. No sooner had they anchored than they were recognized by the people, who proceeded with the utmost energy to gather up the sick and bring them to Jesus. Mark's vivid account suggests more than a few hours of ministration. Possibly it reflects



View on the Sea of Galilee.

the activity of the whole healing ministry just drawing to its close. The report of His presence is described as spreading from village to village (Mk. 6:56). Wherever Jesus went He found the infirm and unfortunate placed within ready reach of His kindly gaze and healing touch or word.

According to the fourth Gospel, however, on this same day Jesus showed Himself in Capernaum. There in its course the people who had been instructed and fed the day before found Him. Some of them at least had spent the night on the plain of Buteiha, hoping to see

Jesus again. Realizing in the morning that in some way He had returned with His disciples to the western coast, they embarked in some boats from Tiberias which had been driven ashore by the gale of the previous night, and went over to Capernaum seeking Him.

Finding Jesus at the synagogue, they wondered how He had eluded their observation. The master admitted their enthusiasm but realized its shallowness. They were eager to follow Him if He would guarantee to relieve their wants. Their eyes had not been opened toward spiritual things by the demonstration, but they were congratulating themselves upon finding at last a bountiful Messiah. A ministry to such physical need would be endless; the food was perishable, the appetite never satisfied.

Once for all Jesus determined to declare Himself. "Seek," he urged, "food that abides and permanently satisfies, which I have come to give you." Catching His general meaning some asked what it was that God wished each one to do. To which Jesus replied that they should receive the message which He as God's ambassador delivered to them. But their one reliable and unquestioned authority was Moses. They asked whether He was equal to that great leader, who gave them heavenly bread.

This question gave Jesus an unequalled opportunity of which He took quick and brave advantage. He declared that the true bread of God both comes directly from Him and gives permanent spiritual life to mankind and that He was this true bread, sent from God, the Father, in order that men could really begin to live forever.

Naturally His auditors were staggered by such a declaration. They would have readily granted Him prophetic standing, but this was no less than a claim to unique partnership with God. In answer to their murmurs Jesus added that in order to understand and accept His claim they must be taught of God, given an insight into truth. Then making His figure more ex-

plicit, He declared that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have the permanent Divine life.

How natural that many should regard Him as insane or overwrought, and that they should cease to follow Him! It was a severe testing for even the most devoted, only to be endured by those whose conceptions of the life of God had already in large measure been fashioned on the pattern of Jesus' own life. Peter could well say for these disciples, "we know that thou art the Holy One of God." They were at least fairly conscious of feeding upon Him, of finding in close fellowship with Him and in the gradual assimilation of His ideals and methods a true quickening of their spiritual selves.

By this figure Jesus forever gave vivid expression to the relationship which He would encourage with His followers. They must not only believe in Him but must seek with persistency and patience to make His mode of life their own. He is God's pattern to mankind. He affords a ready guide to the attainment of the Godlike life. Those who would become children of God require no other direction than the command to live according to His model, assimilating themselves to Him.

Chapter 26. —The Campaigns of Jesus in Galilee. A Review.

Another turning-point has been reached in the ministry of Jesus. With the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum the active propagation of the message of the kingdom almost came to an end. Because of the falling away of disciples on the one hand and the bitter hostility of the religious leaders of Judaism on the other, Jesus was for a time at least quite shut up to His small circle of devoted followers.

The period under review was accordingly the period of aggressive evangelization, of public preaching, teaching and healing. It began with the choice of the Twelve, and was determined in large measure by the desire of Jesus to mould and inspire them. It accepted at the outset a chronic and clever hostility on the part of the Pharisaic and priestly parties, neither official, however, nor deadly. Jesus maintained Himself without their approval by reason of the sure and strong impression which He made upon the people.

The events which have been included in this period of about a year—the second portion of the Galilean ministry—are numerous and important. Some of them are the selection of the Twelve, the Sermon on the Mount, the bringing to life of the son of a widow of Nain, the testimony to John the Baptist, the second preaching tour through the villages of Galilee, the reply of Jesus to the Pharisees who ascribed His miracles to the help of Satan, His wonderful parables by the lake-shore about the kingdom, the notable events in quick succession at Gerasa and Capernaum, the rejection of Jesus at His boyhood village, Nazareth, His third preaching tour, the mission of the Twelve and their instructions, the death of John the Baptist, the feeding of the five thousand, the return to Capernaum, and the discourse there about Jesus as the Bread of Life, which precipitated a crisis in His public relations. It was truly a crowded year. The Gospels relate only

the outline of it, so to speak. The events they describe are but representative of many more.

The Gospel according to Matthew gives the fullest presentation of this period, doing justice to all phases of His ministry and grouping impressively His teachings to His disciples and His manifestations of friendly power, and showing how His earnestly promoted ministry was gradually blocked by the unresponsiveness of many and the hostility of the rulers. The dominant characteristics of the personality of Jesus seem to be resourcefulness, dignity, authority with benignant recognition of need or longing, and judicious as well as dexterous management of opposition. The sermon on the Mount, the call to evangelization, the instructions to the missionaries, the tribute to John and the parables of the kingdom are Matthew's immortal contributions to the record of this period, aiding much toward its proper comprehension as a period of great importance.

The Gospel of Mark emphasizes by its account of this breathless year the cultivation by Jesus of His circle of disciple-associates. His reserve with others becomes frankness with them. He does His work very largely for their sake. At least He never loses an opportunity to expound truth or comment upon experiences when it may be helpful to them. He appears, clearly etched, with the sanity, breadth of purpose, ethical strength and spiritual forcefulness which marks the truly Godlike man.

Luke pays the least attention in detail to this period. Two of the most beautiful passages in the third Gospel, the story of the healing of the son of the widow of Nain and the story of the anointing of the feet of Jesus by the woman who was a sinner, are a part of its material. The writer uses the well-known incidents in illustration of the tenderness, wisdom, sympathy and power of Jesus.

From these three Gospels we gain our impression of the ministry of this year, the fourth Gospel merely supplementing in a most valuable way at the very close.

It was a time of energetic campaigning in the synagogues of Galilee. These were open to Jesus and His representatives, no organized or authoritative steps having been taken against Him by the leaders. Throughout the period Jesus was followed by throngs which were desirous either of being healed or of witnessing His deeds of benevolent power. He was surrounded also by numerous disciples, more or less closely attached to Him and desirous of following His lead. One condition He had to meet is made clear by the first Gospel. His teachings and His gathered results were so different from popular expectation that He was put to a degree upon the defensive. The loyal-hearted John needed a demonstration of Messianic goodness and love, the great commercial centres of Galilee paid relatively slight heed to the "words of grace" that He uttered, His own relatives misinterpreted Him, His disciples needed the parables of the Kingdom for their encouragement and discipline, Herod took Him for another John the Baptist. No one seemed to enter unreservedly and frankly into His plans and methods.

Yet He was steadily gaining ground. How much He had to traverse is revealed by the glimpses given us here and there of the curious blindness of His intimate companions, His chosen few. It meant a good deal, however, that His disciples were ready to brave the consequences of association with Him. As the open hostility to the Master increased, His followers must have likewise come under the ban of the leaders of Judaism. But in proportion as the risks increased, so grew their devotion. They did not completely understand Him, but their sense of His nobleness, kindness, great-hearted generosity and complete spirituality grew with each week of friendly contact. He was ever surprising them, but they were ever measuring Him.

The results of the period were largely such as He won in connection with His own followers. In Galilee at large they were apparently meagre. Indefatigable as He was personally, and notwithstanding the efforts of

the Twelve during their mission, the people of the province were not deeply stirred. Many were interested in His message, but not convinced by it. Of the thousands with whom He came in contact, few persisted in following Him. They besought Him incessantly to heal their sick, but few or none asked Him for forgiveness of sins.

Nevertheless the "work of Jesus was a constructive preparation for the question which later called forth Peter's confession" at Cæsarea Philippi. The results of these months were meagre, but after all they were significant. The impressive teaching with authority and the signs wrought on those that were sick had been, it is true, for the most part, as seed sown on thorny or stony ground, but the little handful of hearers who had surrendered to the personal power of Jesus and were ready henceforth to follow His leadership was soil of the most fertile sort, sure to bring forth a hundredfold. One such convinced and loyal disciple was worth the trials of the year of hard campaigning. With more than a dozen such secured the Master might well take courage and speak with confidence of the church which was to be.

Chapter 27.—The First Northern Withdrawal.

Mk. 7:1—8:9.

The declaration of Jesus to the people that He was the living bread from heaven which they must crave if they would live the Godlike life, made it clear that His ambitions were quite at variance with those of the populace. He did not even contemplate the wresting from the Cæsars of an imperial throne; He was not so much concerned with their future political relations as with their present moral and spiritual ideals. It must have been sore disappointment that led so many to forsake Him after that address in the synagogue at Capernaum.

But the crisis that followed was far more important and acute. Jesus took occasion to define with sharpness the radical difference between His own principles of religious life and those of the Pharisees. He had already been an object of official dislike and hatred; He now became an avowed critic and enemy, since He declared that the very basis of current Pharisaism was wrong.

Pharisaism exalted scrupulousness in the interests of holiness. It was the large and important religious ideal behind the system of ceremonial regulations that gave it apparent justification. Men do not count the pains expended in the acquisition of holiness. But gradually the emphasis had become transferred from the moral preparation for holiness to the physical. He was regarded as a righteous man in the sight of God, no less than in the eyes of the law, who diligently observed the regulations devised to prevent men from overlooking the precepts of the ceremonial law. Such a man wearied himself by following a treadmill of duty and ignored other and higher obligations.

Jesus had consistently refused to be bound by Pharisaic rules of procedure. He neither fasted at set times in a formal way nor turned the Sabbath into a dreary and barren day of unusual restriction. He repeatedly

insisted on distinguishing between rules of procedure and the religious ideals which gave them standing. Again and again, He declared that faithfulness to ceremonial traditions was not religion. He would not have denied the usefulness of religious traditions of a proper sort, nor did He fail to enter into the usual routine of observances throughout the Jewish year. His hostility was not directed toward observances which tended to commemorate religious events, or to promote helpful habits. He merely refused to allow His own religious life or that of His followers to be smothered or extinguished by a mass of useless rules of procedure.

With characteristic courage He met the issue squarely and energetically. Some Jerusalem scribes, possibly a deputation from the Sanhedrin, men at least of great importance and influence, came to Capernaum to question Him. In so doing they were within their rights, for they were the recognized guardians of the purity of the Jewish faith. They raised a question which the Master answered with reference to the frequent purifications regarded as obligatory upon every one who desired to rank as a scrupulously pious Jew. He accused them of making such petty and technical demands a reason for overlooking the plain demands of the law of God, and of turning religion into a business for experts.

But He did not stop there. Turning to the crowd of auditors, He made a declaration which was virtually a challenge. It was the assertion that ceremonial distinctions are not supremely important, that the only serious defilement which can come to a man is that which proceeds from a wicked heart or an unclean imagination. Not what one eats or touches is defiling, but what one says, or thinks, or feels. The real expression of a man is his character.

This seems commonplace now, but it was revolutionary then. Capernaum thereupon ceased to be the effective center for Him that it had been, even Galilee cared little for Him. Confronted by misappreciation or hos-

tility on every hand He turned, perhaps of necessity, perhaps with a sense of relief, to the outlying pagan territory. With Him were His disciples, the Twelve at least and probably others. Acts 1:21, 22 presupposes a larger number.

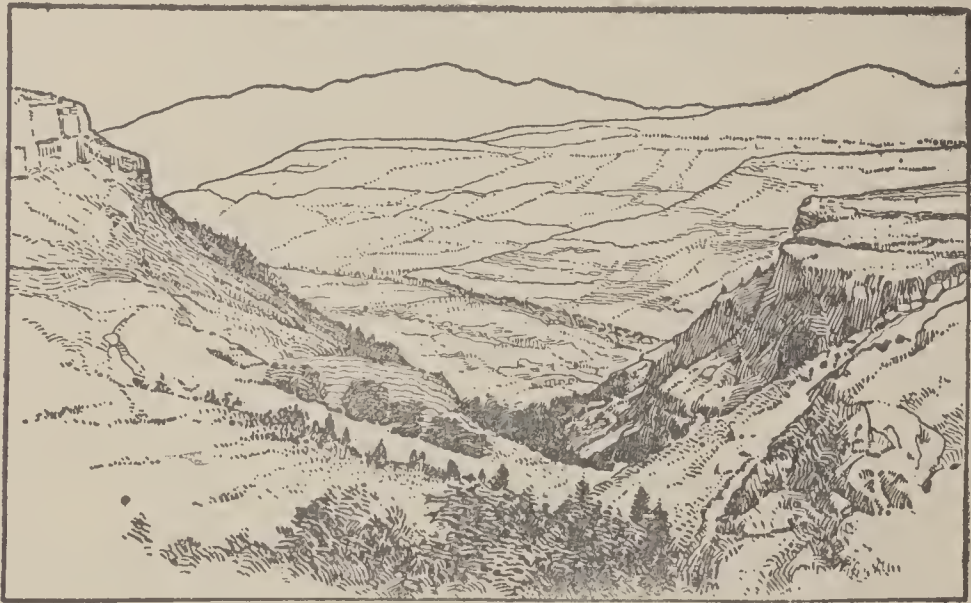
His motive in withdrawing has been variously stated. Whether it was for the sake of inaugurating a mission to non-Jewish people may well be questioned. It was rather to avoid observation and to secure a quiet period of intercourse with His chosen companions. More than ever now He needed to get closer to them and to win their deliberate faith. But one incident of the journey up along the coast is preserved, an episode, however, affording a notable contrast to the experience He had just passed through. A Phœnician woman besought Him to heal her daughter. His reluctance only stirred her to more eager pleading. He avowed Himself as disinclined to begin a new ministry of healing and teaching among an alien people, but she cleverly urged that His immediate presence made it possible for Him to help her in her need. Her wit, humility, and faith were irresistible. Gladly the Master gave her recognition.

How much of a journey the company made is not clear. Matthew's Gospel describes the whole incident very vaguely, mentioning only the fact of going to Phœnicia, and the return to the sea of Galilee. Mark's account makes it clear that they went northward through Sidon, making probable a crossing of the Lebanon range toward Damascus, and a return southward to Decapolis and the sea of Galilee. Each Gospel is meagre in details.

Reaching the shore of the sea, He was again surrounded by eager people. Here they brought before Him a deaf man whose speech had been impaired. Desirous of avoiding notice, Jesus took the man aside from the multitude. He then made use of unusual methods, doubtless intended to rouse the interest of the man and to draw out his faith. The cure profoundly

impressed the people. Despite the commands of Jesus, they eagerly spread the story of His beneficent acts.

Hence a multitude gathered around Him, absorbed by His words and deeds. Jesus had previously been prevented by popular opposition from exercising His ministry helpfully in the Decapolis. Their eagerness He could hardly resist. For three days the ministry continued. By that time the provisions which the people



View in the Lebanon Mountains. From a photograph.

had brought with them were exhausted. With His usual thoughtful generosity Jesus proposed that the multitude be fed. Blessing and distributing the few provisions at hand, He sent them away refreshed.

There is little profit in seeking to prove or disprove such a miracle as the feeding of the four thousand. It was the Master's way to do such things, not to save trouble for His auditors, but to reveal to them the generous love of God.

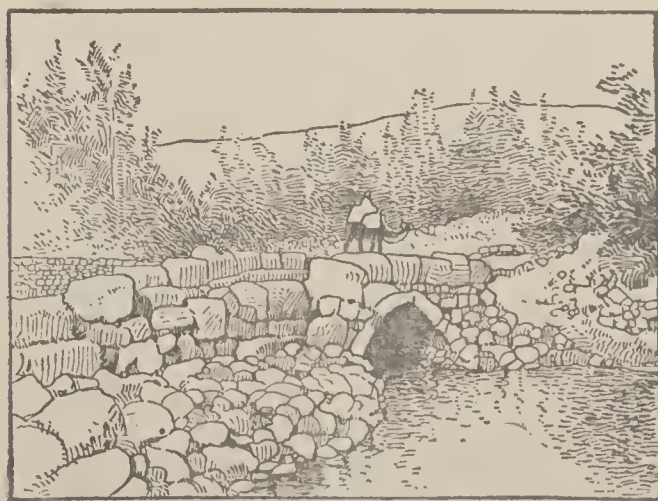
The declaration of Jesus to the scribes has eternal significance. Religion is service but not servitude; it is evidenced by character, not by patience in routine observance; it avoids casuistry, but honors an earnest and deliberate faith.

Chapter 28.—The Second Withdrawal to the North: Peter's Confession.

Mt. 15:39—16:28; Mk. 8:10—9:1.

Jesus and His disciples after completing their work in the Decapolis, crossed over, either to the vicinity of Capernaum or to a point near the southern end of the lake. No sooner was His presence reported than some of the representative Jews came to enter into discussion with Him. Their hostility was quite marked. They demanded that Jesus show them a genuine sign from heaven. Had they really desired enlightenment, Jesus would have treated their request with respect and explained His ideals. But they were only eager to make trouble for Him, not to be convinced of His Messiahship. He therefore refused, point-blank, as Mark's Gospel reports. His ministry had been crowded with significant events. They needed only to keep their eyes open in order to have abundant and satisfying evidence of His sincerity, goodness and power.

Jesus did not remain very long among His enemies. He found it more profitable to withdraw again to a region where He was unknown and might be undisturbed. Going to Bethsaida, He began with His disci-



View on the Road to Cæsarea Philippi.

ples a slow, apparently aimless wandering toward the north, among the villages of Cæsarea Philippi, a journey given up to conversations rather than to deeds.

It was a critical time. Only by continued and close fellowship with the disciples could He help them to acquire such a faith in Him that the disparagement or hostile-

ity of their natural leaders could not shake their allegiance. They could readily see that each one of them was being brought face to face with a momentous choice. There was no common ground for Jesus and the scribes to occupy. All must have been thinking of the crisis and its possible consequences.

But in the mind of Jesus was a far deeper thought. Looking back over His active ministry, He was forced to the conclusion that outside of the circle of disciples He had no reliable following. The influential classes were against Him. With the common people He had been popular. They liked His preaching and took eager advantage of His power to heal. They had even queried whether He were the Coming One. But, at its best, it was curiosity and friendliness, rather than a growing faith. As His disciples made clear, the popular sentiment was superficial, evincing no real comprehension of His personality and affording no reliable basis for the upbuilding of a sturdy faith. Whether the disciples themselves had this sort of faith was the crucial question. Had their close intercourse with Him, their witness of His daily life, brought to them more than love and confidence? Long may Jesus have pondered over this question before He put them to the test, for upon their reply hung the fruitfulness of His active ministry. If His disciples had not understood Him, no one could.

The Gospel of Mark, which so often affords the clue to the development of the ministry, emphasizes two facts concerning this declaration of Messiahship; first, that the Galilean ministry then came practically to a close; second, that it opened the way for a marked change in His methods and teachings. Henceforth His work centered frankly on the disciples, the people being secondary. The Gospel according to Matthew is a more important witness, placing the episode in its true relief. The whole plan of the Gospel seems to turn at the account of Peter's declaration of loyalty. Up to that time, Jesus was described as proclaiming to all who

would hear Him in various ways the good news about the kingdom of heaven; thereafter (16:21) He discussed Messiahship and discipleship to His followers and gave Himself assiduously to their preparation for the important career which awaited them.

It was as usual the outspoken, impulsive, loyal-hearted Peter who voiced for Jesus the conviction of the disciples: "Thou art the Christ," not merely a Messianic forerunner, nor a prophet of Israel, nor merely a good and noble man, but the Christ Himself, the true Herald of God, the Dayspring from on high.

One can hardly believe that Jesus received so wonderful a confession without emotion. The accounts of Mark and Luke seem barren. The story of the first Gospel is inherently probable. Jesus must have realized the significance of the confession and given some expression to His feeling. Such faith as this He had been seeking. It had grown out of an insight fostered by God Himself, rather than from traditions or hopes. It was a growing faith and would become enlightened, giving clearness and finality to the future deliberate judgments of His spiritual successors, in matters of religious faith and practice.

Yet the declarations of Peter signified no more than a beginning. The Christ in his mind, and in that of others, was in large degree the Christ of tradition. While the confidence of the disciples in their Master made them willing to await His pleasure, yet they expected Him in due time to fulfil the current Messianic expectations, setting up an earthly kingdom, conquering the nations, inaugurating a universal rule. They had no idea of the actual future. They had only gripped the fundamental fact that He was indeed the God-sent Messiah.

Without delay Jesus began to set before them the truer conception of what Christhood and consequently discipleship meant. His task was the more difficult because their minds were not plastic. From earliest boyhood Messiahship had meant for them a triumphant

leadership of Israel to the realization of glory and resourcefulness and power, and the attainment of universal dominion. When He spoke of humility, suffering, and service, they simply could not take it in. With His customary impulsiveness, Peter rebuked the Master for so blighting their reasonable hopes. What folly for the Christ to talk about being the victim of the authorities and losing His life! But Jesus declared that this well-meant interference was only evil in its effect. It substituted a human will for that of God. The Divine pathway marked out not alone for Jesus but for His disciples, was a way of self-denial, of unselfish devotion to the interests of others, of the definite subordination of personal interests to those of God and humankind.

The comparison with which the Master concluded His appeal is still a living and quickening query. It raises the question of the true and permanent values of life. What are those elements of life which are precious beyond all others, which cannot be granted in exchange for any amount of selfish prosperity, or personal advantage? Are these to be won only by a deliberate rejection of the selfish theory of life and adoption of the passion for service?

Men and women of to-day are called upon to make the very decision which the disciples made, and after the same deliberate contact with His personality. We have the advantage of being able to view the Master through their eyes, a fond and often blinded gaze, yet one which centred upon facts which have had eternal meaning. Like Luke, we who view His life from a distance and in its perspective almost lose sight of the momentous character of Peter's declaration, for we see that no other verdict could meet the facts.

Chapter 29.—The Transfiguration.

Mt. 17:24-27; Mk. 9:2-50.

The Synoptic Gospels record the fact that Jesus and His disciples lingered, after Peter's epoch-making declaration, in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi. These were doubtless days of the eager discussion of the strange assertions which Jesus had made, assertions which they could not fully appreciate at the time. Perhaps He explained to them from the Scriptures the significance to the righteous of suffering. The thoughts of all were centered upon the defeat and disgrace which seemed to be implied by His words. In the mouth of any other one than their beloved Master the statement would have sounded absurd, but He was not given to trifling, and had spoken with deliberate care.

The trouble with the disciples was their fixed, inherited ideas concerning the Messiah. To associate Messiahship with sacrifice or shame was difficult. It needed such an event as the transfiguration to exhibit Jesus in a way which revealed and emphasized His glory. By it the astounded disciples were made to grasp both ideas and connect them with Jesus. The conceptions were still unrelated in their thinking but were available in the future.

For Jesus, too, the transfiguration must have had great significance. The Gospels show us how continually dependent He was on a prayerful communion with His heavenly Father for strength. It was the sense of divine approval that sustained His courage and kept clear His purpose. As at the baptism, so at the transfiguration, He received a fresh conviction of God's close presence and unwearying care, and an assurance that however bitter might be the experiences He had to face, the glory attained would be greater.

One day, probably toward evening, Jesus went away up into the mountain near at hand, taking with Him, as was His frequent custom, the three disciples who formed the inner circle of the Twelve. There are nat-

ural distinctions in every disciple circle which no leader can or need ignore. Peter, James and John were the most capable of ready sympathy and appreciation. There was apparently no jealousy among the disciples of this intimacy. These three knew Him better than the others and interpreted Him to them. It was a duty so sacred and important that it did not unduly uplift those who performed it nor anger those who were passed by.

The little company ascended an unnamed mountain. Christian tradition favors Tabor as the scene of the transfiguration, whereas current opinion inclines to Hermon. The narrative affords no clue which gives certainty, although Mk. 9:30, 33 points to Hermon. If the disciple-group remained near Cæsarea Philippi the mountain was unquestionably Hermon. But the exact location is of slight importance. It is perhaps significant that few or none of the scenes of important events in the life of Jesus are accurately known.

**Mount Hermon.**

From a photograph.

The third Gospel states that the original purpose of Jesus was to seek seclusion for communion with God. This gives a natural explanation to the incident, wholly congruous with the character of Jesus. It may be questioned whether the transfiguring was not incidental and as unexpected to Jesus as to the three witnesses, another opportune testimony to Him as well as to them, of the Father's watchfulness and love. When the Master went apart, as was His custom, to pray, the three

tried, no doubt, to watch with Him. Luke tells us that they were struggling with sleepiness when suddenly there came a change which made them instantly wide awake and alert. As the Master prayed a heavenly light illumined His countenance and His whole personality was radiant with dazzling brightness, passing the power of words to describe. But He was not alone. On either side stood two men whom they knew to be Moses and Elijah. They were talking with Him regarding His approaching death. Soon they seemed to be about to depart and Peter, hardly knowing what he was saying, proposed that he make three tabernacles that they might remain. But a cloud seemed to overshadow them all, out of which came a voice which witnessed concerning Jesus, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." After the voice they looked around and saw no one but Jesus, who came to them in His natural form with a reassuring word.

Some interpreters regard this experience as purely subjective, although intensely real. The significance of it to the disciples and to Jesus was of course the same, whether it was objective or subjective. That it was seen by all three disciples sufficiently guaranteed its definiteness and meaning. If a vision it was a vision caused by God, not an accident. But the natural interpretation of the Gospel narratives implies that it was objectively real. It assured the disciples that the death of the Messiah which had so sorely troubled their minds was really in line with prophetic and national expectation. It also gave them a new assurance that Jesus was the Messiah He claimed to be—so at least early Christian thinking agreed—and reminded them of their obligation to listen to His words.

It seems clear that the meaning of this experience was not grasped by the disciples at once. No wonder Jesus charged them to keep it locked within their breasts, until the course of events would make it intelligible. They were puzzled by the appearance of Elijah and wondered whether it was the fulfilment of Malachi's

prediction, made so much of by the scribes. Jesus indeed affirmed that an Elijah had come, but unrecognized and opposed, one whose fate prefigured His own. They then perceived that He meant John the Baptist.

Returning the next day to the base of the mountain Jesus found His disciples confronted by a case of disease, which seems to have been epilepsy, with which they were unable to deal. The father's despairing plea touched the Master's heart. With a sigh which spoke volumes of weariness over the continued sluggishness of their spiritual life He drew on the father in kindly fashion to urge his love and pledge his faith and then cured the boy. Mark's elaborate description shows that the scene made a tremendous impression on some eyewitnesses. The disciples wondered why their power had been stayed. Jesus told them it was because they had not expected that the cure would be performed. Only a believing appeal to the power of God was adequate either in His case or in theirs.

There was great fitness in the message with which the beautiful vision was brought to a close. Those who are granted visions of spiritual realities, such as average men and women rarely gain, incur responsibilities correspondingly great. Theirs is an obligation to render intelligent and obedient leadership in the spirit of Christ's commands.

His commandments are to be executed obediently because He is the adequate and intelligible revealer of the will and purpose of God. Therefore His words have unquestionable authority and unending value.

Chapter 30.—Jesus at the Feast of the Tabernacles.

Jo. chs. 7, 8.

During the days following the transfiguration, the group of disciples with Jesus continued their unobtrusive, leisurely progress through Galilean territory, making gradually toward Capernaum. Mark's Gospel (9:30) implies that Jesus was at considerable pains to keep out of the public eye. Naturally they all continued to discuss the theme that was uppermost in their minds and that weighed on every heart. It was the great opportunity for Jesus to connect by repeated and insistent explanations His accepted Messiahship with the possibility of treatment not merely hostile, but vindictive. Had He failed to establish this connection, the event itself would have been a disaster almost irreparable, instead of an enlightening triumph. Its meaning was by no means grasped by the disciples. To them Messiahship, in spite of all that the Master could say, spelled glory rather than sacrifice, and opportunity rather than obligation. The larger view could only come through sadly enlightening experience.

In some mysterious way, the confidence which the Three must have had after their unique and blessed experience on the mountain communicated itself to the whole company. Paying little heed to the predictions of Jesus, they let themselves dwell with delight upon that aspect of Messiahship which they did understand. Visions of a glorious future dazzled their eyes. Before long they were in the heat of an intense discussion over precedence. Doubtless there was no question as to the place of the first three or four. Their intimacy with the Master gave them an unquestioned primacy. The problem concerned the others and their relative fitness for important posts.

That they could continue such a disputation argues that now, as later, Jesus was much alone, "going before them" (Mk. 10:32), wrapped in deep thought of what was before Him. But He was never so abstracted as

to be oblivious to the needs and conditions of those who were with Him. He knew His disciples so well that the trend of their thoughts was perfectly apparent to Him. They needed a lesson which should at once rebuke, enlighten and appeal.

With His accustomed considerateness, He took an object lesson by which to illustrate and enforce the principle which He set forth. Having reached Capernaum, when all were together in a house, still desirous of avoiding public attention, He suddenly asked the theme of their earnest discussion on the road. While they were in confusion from very shame of acknowledging their ambitious desires, Jesus took in His arms a little child, declaring that he was a true symbol of the disciple.

What Jesus meant by this and by His further declaration that primacy in the heavenly kingdom was granted to him who excelled in serviceableness, is clear yet debatable. It was childlikeness not childishness, that He meant. The disciple is one among many, a member of the great family of God, bound to conduct himself towards every one as a brother and friend. The frankness, the friendliness, the joy in service, the simple trustfulness of the child, should be his.

Trained as were the Twelve in the school of legalism which paid stricter attention to retribution or penalty than to free forgiveness, no wonder that Peter inquired one day regarding the limits of forgiveness. The parable of the unmerciful servant was the reply. God has forgiven such great transgressions of ours that no human score can count in comparison with it. There is practically no limit to the exercise of a forgiving spirit.

The feast of tabernacles drew rapidly near. There was a general expectation that Jesus would make His appearance at Jerusalem. His brethren, who had little comprehension of His thought or plans, urged Him to seize the opportunity to make a public demonstration of the validity of His claims. But Jesus was not ready

yet to present Himself in a challenging way as the Messiah at Jerusalem. He was still avoiding demonstrations but inviting confidence. He made His way quietly to the city, where there had been much exchange of varying sentiment regarding Him among the gathered multitudes. The curious fact is that they regarded Him as being everything but a Messiah. They willingly acknowledged Him to have prophetic gifts and practical wisdom, but He answered in but few respects to their ideas of what the Messiah would be.

Jesus simply claimed to be the true representative of God, doing His will, declaring His truth, exhibiting His spirit, and carrying out His purposes. He demanded confidence on the ground of His absolute unselfishness and freedom from wrong-doing. He reproved His critics for wilful refusal to see facts as they were and to judge accordingly. Many were deeply impressed by His words.

It was perhaps after the great ceremonial of the closing day of the feast that Jesus appealed to the people, describing Himself as the source of living water, eternally refreshing the soul. Through Him they were to know God with intimacy. His words thrilled all who heard. Even the officers of the temple guards, hardened as they were, could not but regard Him with awe.

With equal pertinence, at the time of the lighting of the great candelabra in the court, Jesus declared Himself to be the light of the world, its guide in a world of moral darkness, the assurance of its growth to moral strength. Life cannot flourish without light. When Jesus described His relation to the human world under these figures, He virtually declared Himself to be an indispensable factor in life.

There were many important discussions and declarations during the period that Jesus delayed in Jerusalem. Speaking to some who were disposed to accept Him, He declared that those who heartily followed His teaching would gain spiritual freedom.

Offended at this hint of bondage they claimed to be the free children of Abraham, but Jesus declared that their unwillingness to hear and obey the truth showed them rather to be the bond slaves of Satan, the father of lies. Those who lived the life He was urging would find that life unending. Shocked as were the bystanders by their understanding of His meaning, it was nothing in comparison to their horror at His solemn declaration that before even Abraham, He was in the world. It was an unmistakable claim of divinity. Like so many of His sayings over which subsequent centuries have pondered, it needed time for its apprehension and application.

These declarations of Jesus were helpful in the extreme. His figures mean much. He sustains, refreshes, interprets, develops, illumines, exhibits life as it really is and as it ought to be. The one who takes Him as an example is cultivating true Godlikeness.

Chapter 31. — The Mission the Seventy.

Lu. 9 : 51—11 : 13.

When Jesus returned to Galilee after His long continued absence, it had become painfully evident that the province had ceased to be a suitable scene for His ministry. At every turn He met with prejudice, indifference, and open hostility. His enemies were now well organized and shrewdly led. The Pharisees of Judea were making common cause against Him with those of Galilee. Probably He found Himself excluded from the free use of the village synagogues, which had been His accustomed preaching places. Galilee as well as Judea had become unavailable for His ministry.

From the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, one might infer from the brief account of the following period that Jesus, in consequence of this interference with His freedom of teaching, centered His attention upon His disciples. They give a truthful impression, although not

a complete one. Jesus did predominantly aim to develop far-sighted, self-reliant, sympathetic disciples. But His method was partly indirect. He seemed according to the other Gospels to become very active again. The Gospel of Luke in particular attributes to Him at this time, between the Transfiguration and the last week at Jerusalem, a marked increase in teaching and preaching and healing. It locates this activity neither mainly in Judea nor in Galilee, but here and there in the region on the other side of the river Jordan, called by Josephus, Perea. The fourth Gospel describes two visits to Jerusalem during these months. Thus the period was one of movement to and fro without a specific goal, the opportunity of the moment determining its character and direction.

The country which we know as Perea was under the control of Herod Antipas. It was open, however, as a refuge to Jesus and His followers and as an opportunity for preaching, because it was religiously even freer than Galilee, being far more under the influence of Greek and Roman civilization. The proximity of the free cities of the Decapolis had a perceptible liberalizing influence. Perea was practically a foreign country full of Jews, who valued prosperity above orthodoxy. The Jews of Judea and Galilee felt distinctly superior to those who dwelt in Perea, yet had no such antagonism for them as for Samaritans. Jesus and His company could wander from village to village with freedom and without fear. Of this opportunity He seemed now to take full advantage. If Luke's allotment of incidents is chronological, the experiences of the early Galilean ministry were repeated again and again.

For this work of evangelization Jesus prepared by sending before Him the seventy disciples. That He had so many followers equipped for doing responsible service comes as a surprise to the reader of the Gospels, whose attention is continually focussed upon the little group of twelve. By Luke more than by the other Gospels one is prepared to understand the real situation,

exhibited by the manifest reluctance of the religious rulers to proceed to extreme measures with Jesus in public, and confirmed by Paul's "five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15:6). Jesus had by this time a considerable body of tried, intelligent, earnest disciples, who were ready to rally round Him when He came within their vicinity, many of them following Him everywhere. Had He chosen to send out two hundred, that number might have been as readily at His disposal.

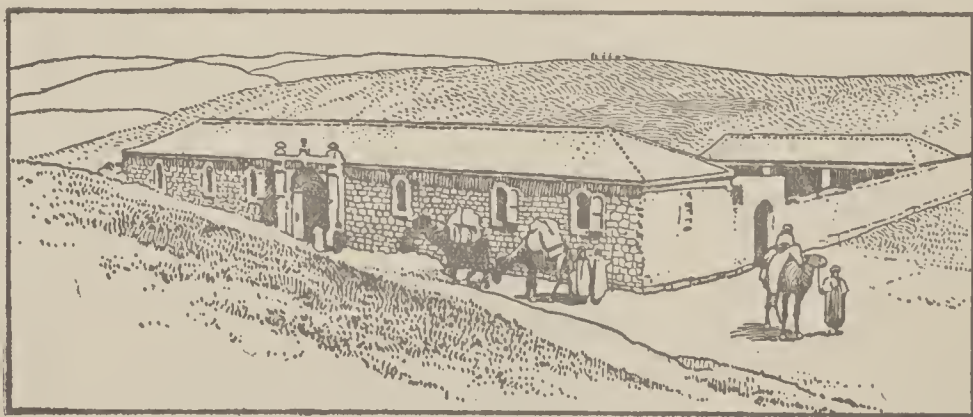
Many regard the number sent forth as indicative of the symbolic purpose of Jesus. Seventy was as representative a number to the mind of a Jew as twelve. The latter distinctly stood for the ideal Israel and had no wider significance. The mission of the Twelve was to the nation and to it alone. The number seventy represented in the Jewish mind the whole world. It is a Jewish round number denoting often in Scripture a large number of people whose exact enumeration is unknown. Whether used loosely or specifically its general significance must have been that the Seventy were commissioned to carry the Gospel message to all races. This broadening of the scope of Jesus' ministry had become inevitable. The Jesus of the closing half year of the active ministry was one who was no longer exclusively thinking about His countrymen; He rather had His vision set upon the great world of humankind.

The seventy disciples were sent forth to prepare the way before Him, perhaps to enable Jesus to use His scanty remaining time to greater advantage, or to insure His hearty reception where He might not be known. They were given directions similar to those issued to the Twelve. They were to go straight to their destination, avoiding all distractions, devoting themselves entirely to their work, allowing neither hospitality nor opposition to interfere. The added note of judgment became appropriate to the situation, as the end of the ministry drew near.

They went forth with glad hearts and gradually rejoined the Master, reporting a successful mission,

elated at the power they had exercised. Jesus replied by showing to them the significance of that power. No evil influence could prevail against them, whether fraud or force. But they had something better yet to stand for. They had become citizens of heaven, redeemed into serviceableness. No wonder that Jesus rejoiced at this triumph of faith! These disciples, avowedly victorious, were, in popular consideration, neither wise nor enlightened like the Pharisees. But they had become wise in the counsels of God to know spiritual realities. Here again Jesus recognized and declared the world-wide difference between true religion as He viewed it, and as it was viewed by His contemporaries. How suited to His mood was the gracious invitation of Matthew 11:28-30!

Two characteristic narratives are given by Luke in this connection, each illustrating a phase of the active life of Jesus. His method as a teacher is shown by the parable of the good Samaritan. It was so true to the every-day possibilities of life that it drove home its



The Inn of the Good Samaritan. From a photograph.

moral. Jesus used it to illustrate genuine neighborliness, as being an active sympathy for the one at hand who is in need, whatever his race or creed. The visit at the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany throws light upon the loving friendships of Jesus with those who opened their hearts to Him and how He ever used its opportunities for gentle and helpful ministry. He did not reprove Martha for her spirit of service which was

her religion. He rather defended Mary for concentration on her opportunity for loving fellowship.

The mission of the Seventy was truly typical of the continuous service to which Christ is ever summoning disciples, that they may prepare mankind to hear His words. For such service the essential preparation is true discipleship. It will come to mean true neighborliness, true Christlikeness and great effectiveness.

Chapter 32.—The Third Presentation at Jerusalem; Jesus the True Shepherd of Men.

Jo. chs. 9, 10.

The fourth Gospel is the sole authority for a visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the feast of Dedication, at which time He seems to have healed the man born blind and used the beautiful allegories of the Door and Shepherd. Such a visit was characteristic and natural. He had at the holy city, so dear to Him, not a few faithful followers, unnoticeable, no doubt, in the throng of the indifferent or the hostile, yet giving promise of others who when won over to belief in Him would be influential in bringing many more. His visits at this period to the very stronghold of fanatical Judaism exhibit His qualities of calm courage, serene hopefulness and unswerving confidence in the divine care. Whenever a great throng from all the country could be expected at Jerusalem He tried to be present.

The feast of Dedication was such a popular festival, a time of genuine celebration with enough of religious significance to give it permanence and prestige. It gathered crowds of Jews to Jerusalem who were in their least fanatical mood. Jesus may have visited Jerusalem much oftener than the record indicates. His visit at this time is chronicled because of its interesting outcome.

During the feast the Master's attention was drawn

by His disciples to a case of hapless misery which moved them to propound that perpetual query of the conscientious Israelite, who believed in the righteous government of God and His exact distribution of justice to all mankind. Here was a



Pool of Siloam.

From a photograph.

son of Israel blind from his birth. They wondered who was responsible for this calamity. To such casuistry, extremely dear to rabbinical minds who loved to distribute exact portions of guilt and penalty, Jesus was unresponsive. He declared that it was not a case for judgment but for relief to exhibit the goodness of God rather than His justice. So saying He anointed the man's eyes with clay hastily moulded, and

directed him to make his way to the pool of Siloam and wash. In this large-hearted fashion He made it easier for the man to comply.

This notable miracle created a public sensation. The neighbors of the man could scarcely trust their own eyes when they saw the man with normal vision. Brought before the Pharisees in order to have his case explained, these leaders were deeply perplexed. They tried at first to dismiss the matter by raising an issue of Sabbath-breaking. Confronted by the unquestionable fact of the healing by Jesus and unable to browbeat the former sufferer into a denial, they deliberately excommunicated him. This was a serious penalty for him. It put him socially and religiously on the plane of a leper, avoided by all.

The manifest injustice of this treatment brought Jesus and the man quickly together. He became con-

vinced that Jesus was one whom he would gladly follow. His attitude and that of the Pharisees gave another occasion for Jesus to frankly say that the latter were blinded by their persistent and deliberate prejudgment of all that He said or did.

Their treatment of the man and of Jesus gave occasion to one of the finest allegorical declarations in the Gospels. Using a figure familiar and dear to all readers of the prophetic messages, Jesus gave emphatic expression to the wide difference between the Pharisaic spirit and His own. No figure could be at once so simple and yet so far-reaching as that of the Shepherd. Jeremiah and Ezekiel alike loved to use it to describe the One who was to appear and be the true representative of the righteous Father to His obedient people. When Jesus declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd He did far more than make a happy illustration; He made a distinctively Messianic claim, and placed the cold-hearted Pharisees in the category of those selfish enemies of Israel with which the nation's greatest leaders had ever been in antagonism.

The great indictment of the Pharisees of Jesus' day was that as a body they were indifferent to the interests of the individual. They had built up a great religious machine to which all other values were sacrificed. They had thus gradually ceased to be responsive to divine influences or to seek for them in other than established forms. Their unwillingness to be taught was the great obstacle to any reform.

Jesus was like a shepherd, ever watchful for every one of His sheep, dealing with each one in the way that his need directed, knowing them and known by them, giving even His life on their behalf. The figure expressed tenderness, thoughtfulness, affection, patience, wisdom, self-devotion combined with courage, resourcefulness, and zeal. It sums up the positive virtues of true leadership, and excludes the technical, unfeeling professional attitude so easy for religious leaders to assume.

The second allegory of the Door was much more assertive. By it Jesus meant that through Him men would find their real religious home. His followers have not merely fullness of life, but freedom and subsistence. All that gives life real significance is the natural possession of the one who enters into glad fellowship with Jesus.

These were wonderful words. They forced from reluctant lips a confession of His remarkable personality. Some appealed to Him to declare Himself publicly as the Messiah. But He had ever left others to draw this conclusion from the impression made upon them by His life. He would not force an unwilling and meaningless allegiance, asserting that God had given Him some followers who were irrevocably His own, for He and His Father were one.

This claim stirred some of the ever-excitables Jews to stone Him for blasphemy. With an *ad-hominem* argument which seems to be intended to silence them by their own favorite method of argumentation Jesus denied the charge of blasphemy, showing that the Scriptures sanctioned a man in calling himself a son of God. He reverted, however, to His real argument that a valid proof of His mission and character was to be found in His deeds. They carried independent and final evidence of His relationship with God.

The words of Jesus during this hasty visit are full of value for all time. He set the working standard for every life. Every follower of His is bound to take toward his fellowmen the shepherd attitude of unselfish serviceableness. He also declared a searching principle of selection, when He called Himself the Door. The only way into God's kingdom is through Him, and by the acceptance of His standards of life and duty and love.

Chapter 33.—Renewed Pharisaic Opposition and Popular Enthusiasm.

Lu. 11 : 37—14 : 24.

The narrative in the Gospel according to Luke of these days of wandering in the trans-Judaic villages gives the impression of days crowded with incidents and throbbing with interest. The common people once more followed Him in throngs, drawn in part by curiosity, to some extent by reverence, but most of all (Lu. 11 : 53—12 : 1) by the public indications of differences between Him and their religious leaders. He devoted Himself to the scribes and Pharisees and to the populace, yet with a consistent remembrance, after all, of the faithful disciples never far away from Him, whose interests were so inseparably bound up with His and who had made so many heroic sacrifices to show their loyalty for Him.

Luke gives several characteristic illustrations of His dealings with the leaders. He seemed to receive attentions now and then from them, due neither to friendliness nor to hostility, but to a frank desire, natural to men of education, who were sure of their own position and power, to discuss freely with a fresh and vigorous mind like His the questions which were of paramount interest to them. Jesus knew them well and the motives which underlay their hospitality, and accepted their invitations with readiness and serene independence. His table-talk, as reported by Luke, was keen and dignified. The rupture that took place was their fault, not His.

Jesus had little patience with their endless unnecessary performances. The theory of the Pharisees of His day was that by very greatly overdoing a desirable act it would be more surely performed to the needful extent. They multiplied washings and prayers and fasts and every other proper action until life lost all its buoyancy and zest and became a treadmill of inexorable duty. They then turned around and wearied themselves in devising ways of avoiding the tasks thus imposed. For

all except the naturally sincere, who force themselves to hardship, their religious life became a great sham, a pretense at religion, nothing more than a religious trade.

Against this spirit Jesus always cried out. With merciless frankness He revealed to them their hideous corruption. Wondered at for neglecting the ceremonial ablution before taking food, He answered by declaring that they were solicitous about external purity but heedless of inward wickedness; they wasted precious time over trifles and were unable to give attention to justice and piety. They were ever thinking of themselves rather than of God, and of their interests more than His.

The Pharisees were laymen, but their kindred in spirit were the professionals, the scribes, who resented the Master's criticisms, as words which might apply to them as well. He entirely agreed with their opinion, but added special reasons for denouncing them, such as the delight in manufacturing new religious duties which they themselves shirked, their continued opposition to true religious leaders, and their blinding of the people. Naturally such uncompromising talk made them hostile and anxious to find a means of discomfiting Him. They plied Him with questions, but without avail.

There follow in the account of Luke a series of sayings to the multitude which are found in other connections in other Gospels. These duplicates raise the old question whether Jesus used these sayings repeatedly or the writers fitted them, each in his own way, into his story of the active life of Jesus. Doubtless each view is partly true. Jesus may well have repeated some of His sayings with some freedom in accordance with His general plan.

One of those who had joined Him, encouraged by His championship of the rights of the people, begged Jesus to act as arbiter in a family dispute. In refusing this request Jesus used the parable of the foolish rich man to exhibit the shortsightedness of one whose whole life

goes into the making and storing of money. When it ends he is no better off than when he began the struggle.

To avoid the Pharisaic temper, the self-centered life and little ambitions was the burden of His advice. He seemed to think of the prevailing danger as that of a careless, thoughtless enjoyment of life without the element of preparation for a larger future. His follower, however, like a faithful servant, would be found always ready and watchful.

Peter wondered whether Jesus meant to include all of His disciples by this warning or only the few who were His closest followers. Jesus replied by indicating that there were no distinctions in responsibility, but only in capacity. The true follower of Jesus is always rendering all the stewardship of time or energy or brotherliness of which he is capable. A lapse into domineering, or selfishness, or laziness, or any other kind of negligence, is unfaithfulness which marks him as unworthy of his trust.

The thought of judgment awaiting the responsible but unfaithful ones gave more or less direction and color to the mind of Jesus at this time. The tension between the Roman rulers and the bigoted populace was growing very great. Pilate, the procurator, had more than once tested the determination of the Jews to defend their religious liberties. What particular massacre was referred to by the one who spoke to Jesus about the slain Galileans we cannot determine. Jesus incidentally made use of the opportunity afforded Him to show the absurdity of the notion that a calamity like this indicated that those who suffered were great sinners. It rather indicated that the judgments of God were beginning to be experienced and that all men were bound to be warned.

One saying of His we are deeply indebted to Luke for preserving with its mingling of sarcasm and dignity and tenderness. It reveals the real Jesus among His friends. "That fox" summed Herod up; Jesus despised his crafty and calculating self.

In Perea as elsewhere the Sabbath question was raised. Invited after the synagogue service to the house of a ruling Pharisee, He was confronted with a man who had the dropsy. Jesus accepted the implied challenge, and with an allusion to their own free practise which closed their lips, He healed the sufferer. He then made candid criticism of two Pharisaic customs. They were sticklers for precedence and by no means slow to assert their claims. They were also fond of lavish entertainment which could be repaid in kind. This self-centredness Jesus never failed to rebuke.

His closing words seemed to have roused some self-complacent guest to a platitude regarding their coming heavenly joy. In reply Jesus spoke the wonderful parable of the Great Supper, to which the friends of the host were invited. They were reluctant and sent plausible excuses until the indignant host opened wide his doors to all the city who were in need, welcoming them rather than his former guests to his banquet. By this He meant to say that heaven was not a place of privilege, reserved for a condescending caste. This lesson well exemplifies the social sympathy and truly democratic spirit of Jesus. He was ever a critic of unearned privilege, of unfelt devotion, or of unused ability.

Chapter 34.—Parables of Grace and Warning.

Lu. chs. 15, 16.

The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel of Luke exhibit in the highest degree the resourcefulness and skill of Jesus as a religious teacher. Never indeed did man speak like Him. His most earnest appeals were clothed in forms as attractive as they were fitting. He often seemed to use parables in self-defense. When Pharisees or others found fault with Him an apt parable was His reply.

The immortal parables of the fifteenth of Luke were a response to the criticism of the Pharisees and scribes because He not only preached to the sinful and the outcast but associated freely with them, even partaking of their food. Such a manifestation of friendship a Pharisee simply could not understand. The noblest of them dealt with these classes in a condescending way. But Jesus treated them as His friends, accepting their hospitality in His gracious, winning way. He thus broke down their reserve, won their confidence, and drew them in throngs around Him.

Judaism's boast and her greatest curse was her spirit of exclusiveness. Adopted as a measure which would promote religious purity and therefore holiness, the practice of this characteristic became considered as a token of superiority and a reason for despising other peoples. It did not stop at that point. Gradually the lines became drawn as rigidly within Judaism as without. The Pharisees classed "the people of the land," that is to say, the common working people, the brawn of the nation, with harlots and publicans, because they were quite unable to keep up any such artificial religious system as that in which the Pharisees took pride. A truly pious Pharisee occupied much of his time in determining and executing petty and usually senseless details. "The followers of Shammai at a feast began with the blessing for the day, then blessed the wine, then washed their hands and filled the cup,

then laid their napkins on the table; the followers of Hillel began by blessing the wine, then repeated the blessing for the day, then filled the cup, afterward washing their hands, and last of all placing their napkins on the cushion." We can well imagine how weary of such puerilities the fresh and noble heart of Jesus would become, and how gladly by His example would He show that such standards of piety and estimation were not His own. He did not believe in segregation, as the parables of the tares and of the drag-net show. Good and wicked men He declared would have to go on living together until the judgment day. He went further and claimed that it was wicked to disregard a sinner's need. To be neighborly in the sense of the law was to act like the good Samaritan. To see a sinner without trying to help him was wrong in practice and wrong in theory. He aimed to show the correctness of His point of view, and to justify it even to Pharisaic minds by illustrations which they could not gainsay.

Although these parables are connected in Luke's Gospel with the Perean ministry it is really to be noted that they are suitable in character for almost any occasion—controversial, didactic, or evangelistic, to any other period when the question of dealing with "sinners" was prominent, and to any sort of audience—the disciples who needed broadening, the common people, sinners who needed encouragement, or the critically complacent Pharisees, who needed reproof. No one would ever question their authenticity or their value as portraiture of God.

No one interpretation can exhaust the significance of these marvelous parables. They are capable of being taken from various view points. Some have termed the first three the "Parables of the Lost Things," but Plummer's title "Parables of the Love and Free Forgiveness of God" is better. The first two emphasize the value which God must set on every individual soul. Even a shepherd who owns a numerous flock throws his whole soul into the search for the one sheep which he may

have lost. It is not the size of the loss, but the safety of the sheep which stirs him to his patient, unwearying, laborious search. He does not resent by neglect the heedless straying of the sheep, but in his larger wisdom takes the proper means for its recovery. When the sheep is safe again his heart is full of joy. How true an analogy to the joy of God over a repentant sinner! Similarly a woman, who carelessly loses a little coin, perhaps an ornament, will search through the house with a light, and when she has found it, she communicates her joy to the whole neighborhood. Even so God seeks to redeem each sinner and rejoices over every one snatched from an evil life.

The third parable emphasizes the human side of the transformation in the heart of the sinner, the rise and growth of repentance, as well as the encouraging reception which God gives. Grotius called it "clearly the finest of all Christ's parables." It is remarkable alike for its teaching and for its exquisite form. It portrays a son who dishonored his father and forgot him but who finally came to himself and sincerely repented. Returning home in humiliation his father recognizes him, forgives him all, gives him honorable standing, and celebrates his return. The elder brother of the prodigal bitterly questions this treatment, but his father tells him that it is not an exhibition of justice but a manifestation of joy.

The two parables of the sixteenth of Luke, while apparently unrelated to the preceding, are in matter of fact in natural connection. While the three parables of the lost combated the Pharisees' spirit of exclusiveness, these two are directed at their self-indulgence. The first reveal its danger, the latter its folly. The unrighteous steward, as verse nine shows, was commended for his foresight and prudence in providing for the future by the means ready to his hand. Christ declared that all those who live for religious ends should be relatively as sagacious in promoting them. The Pharisees were, to say the least, unwary.

The story of Dives and Lazarus exhibits the other side of the argument. It shows how disastrous may be the consequences of failing to make a wise use of earthly opportunity. The self-centered man is the loser in the long run. Dives was no criminal by intent; he lived hospitably in his way, but he did no good with his wealth and therefore was justly punished.

The principle is far-reaching. It applies to every kind of ability. The follower of Christ must use his gifts at all times for unselfish ends. He may be rich or poor, influential or humble, but up to the measure of his opportunity he is responsible. For him to do less is to be shortsighted as well as negligent.

Chapter 35.—The Raising of Lazarus.

Jo. 11:1-54.

From beyond Jordan, where He was busied in the grateful work of healing and preaching, Jesus was again summoned, not long before the passover, to the vicinity of Jerusalem, this time by the agonized appeal of the two sisters of Bethany, with whom He maintained a friendship of more than common strength. They seemed to know where to find Him and sent promptly to let Him know that their brother Lazarus was dangerously ill. It is curious that so little mention is made of the brother, either before or after this event, in the Gospel narrative. Doubtless he was younger than the sisters, too young to be a leader in the community or nation, or else a man of contemplative temperament, whose value to Jesus lay in his quickness to comprehend and sympathize with the Master's plans rather than in his active support. At all events, the household turned instinctively to Jesus in that hour of supreme need. The sisters did not question His prompt response. In the very intensity of their concern and absorption of their grief they did not consider how

dangerous it would be for Jesus to make His appearance with a mere handful of followers within easy reach of the authorities at Jerusalem. He was virtually an outlaw with a price upon His head. Considerations like these would not prevent Jesus from performing a sacred duty, but they explain the prudence which He displayed when His little group arrived at Bethany. They halted in the outskirts, until Martha could be advised of His arrival.

The narrative in the fourth Gospel states that Jesus waited for two days before responding to the summons. His reason for this delay we may only conjecture. To ascribe it to a fear of personal consequences seems absurd. No more heroic or courageous soul ever lived than Jesus. He may have delayed because the assurance (vs. 41) that God had granted Him the power to raise up Lazarus was not promptly received. The delay may have been necessary in order that the miracle should be beyond any question. Its justification was the profound impression produced alike upon the disciples and upon the populace.

The disciples wondered at His decision to go to Bethany. They supposed that He had regarded it as impracticable. Leaders of men, whose lives affect the fortunes of countless others, may not respond to the dictates of affection with entire freedom. Jesus replied in characteristic parable fashion that the venture was not dangerous for one who could see his way ahead, and declared that the outcome would be of great significance. They did not quite put by their fears. The enterprise seemed clearly suicidal. Yet with a loving doggedness of courage native to him, the slow-witted Thomas voiced their common willingness to follow Jesus even unto death. That such men, when later actually face to face with the temple guards, fled for their lives, belied neither their sincerity nor their courage.

Reaching Bethany they found the little village thronged with the friends of the family who had gath-

ered, chiefly from Jerusalem, to show their respect for the deceased. Lazarus and his sisters were apparently well-to-do and well known. Oriental courtesy compels the attendance of kinsfolk and friends on occasions of family rejoicings or grief. Jesus therefore forebore to go directly to the home, but sent a message to Martha which she promptly obeyed. Her word of greeting need not be understood as a reproach. Doubtless she supposed that Jesus had spared no pains to reach Bethany. Her dominant thought is one of truth. But her splendid faith was made clearer by her replies to the stirring declarations of Jesus.



Traditional Tomb of Lazarus.

From a photograph.

That her brother would rise again in the general resurrection was an article of faith in which she had professed belief from her youth up. To this she makes formal assent. It did not carry much comfort. But when Jesus identified the hope of eternal life with faith in Himself, she accepted this larger truth, for she had full faith in Him. Her confession should be ranked with that of Peter at Cæsarea Phil-

ippi, as an evidence of genuine triumphant faith.

When Mary met Him she fell at His feet. The matter-of-fact Martha would never express her emotion in that way. At the tomb she hesitates to permit the tomb to be opened for reasons which evince her practical good sense, even though it ran counter to the real faith which she also possessed.

Jesus gave evidence of deep emotion as He approached the tomb. The observers attributed this to His affection for Lazarus. The word used to depict the emotion sig-

nifies a sort of indignation, usually aroused in Jesus by an exhibition of spiritual stolidity or barrenness. However much He was affected by the curious bystanders, He did not hesitate acknowledging the gift of power from God when He commanded the dead to come forth from the tomb.

Because the raising of Lazarus is the most notable miracle recorded in the New Testament, it has aroused unending discussion. Some question its authenticity because the Synoptists made no mention of it, and because it was not referred to at the trial. The subtle coincidences and connection with the other Gospel narratives more than counter-balance these arguments. The raising of Lazarus, as Fairbairn has pointed out, makes the triumphal entry a natural circumstance.

The raising of Lazarus led to an increased activity on the part of the enemies of Jesus. Some, to be sure, believed on Him, but that counted for little. The Sanhedrin gathered and deliberately planned to put Jesus to death. They regarded Him as politically, no less than religiously, dangerous, and hesitated no longer.

Probably no one who is unprejudiced would think of taking the story of Lazarus as other than a statement of fact. It does not resemble a parable or an allegory or a fictitious narrative of any sort. Its fitness for a place in the fourth Gospel is evident, for it exhibits gloriously the divine Christ, through whom the Father could perfectly manifest His power.

It is instructive to note that Jesus gained His power from God through prayer, a means which all may use with freedom. Such prayer can remove mountains and achieve seeming impossibilities.

Jesus demonstrated in Himself the real significance of life and its eternal character. He made the earthly portion of it seem but preparatory and trivial in comparison with that which would follow. To die was in His view merely to go to the Father and be with Him. To truly believe in God and to live the Godly life was to begin to inherit eternal life.

Chapter 36.—The Final Journeying toward Jerusalem.

Mk. 10:2-16; Lu. 17:11—18:14.

The unconcealed desire of the Sanhedrin to lay hold of Jesus, after His raising of Lazarus had become a matter of common report, made it necessary for Him to withdraw once more from the vicinity of Jerusalem. He made His way quietly to Ephraim, a place not many miles away from the sacred city, but quite secluded. Here a few weeks were passed in quiet preparation for the approaching trial. It was doubtless a time of retrospect and forecast. Jesus knew that a crisis was impending. He was to enter Jerusalem for the last time. How to accomplish this with the maximum of direct appeal to the people for a thoughtful verdict upon His ideas and methods was His problem. Yet He was at peace because of His unshaken confidence in God and in the future. He thought His course through, and thenceforth exhibited no hesitancy in the development of His program.

Apparently Jesus with His followers, not the Twelve alone but a considerable number, began a wandering which had as its goal the passover at Jerusalem, but tended for the time being in various directions. To have gone directly to the city would have taken but a few hours. It is possible that this wandering lasted as many weeks. The Gospels yield no note of time; they hint at an inflexible purpose, yet describe an unwearying interest in the current needs and perplexities of the people.

To this short period Luke seems to assign a varied series of instructive episodes. They are at best but samples of the rich experiences of those crowded days, but serve to explain the wonderful moulding power of a daily contact with the Master. The very atmosphere was apostolic. Jesus kept emphasizing the blessedness of faith, however manifested, and its assurance.

Once while making their way along between Samaria and Galilee where the population was somewhat mixed

the party met a group of lepers, one of whom was a Samaritan. At their prayer He gave them a virtual promise of healing, if they would follow the prescribed rites of purification. While on the way to see the priests, they were cleansed. One alone of the number returned to express his thankfulness to Jesus, and he was this Samaritan. The nine may not have been wholly unmindful of their obligation; they may even have felt bound to obey with scrupulous exactness the directions of the One who had so graciously listened to their cry for aid. But after all the Samaritan in his noble self-forgetfulness and unreflecting gratitude acted rightly. He did what Jesus Himself would have been sure to do. He could not delay a moment in the expression of his thankfulness to God and to His prophet, as no doubt He thought Jesus to be. Jesus gave him His direct approval.

No less educative were the two imaginary incidents by which Jesus sought to convey His views on certain aspects of prayer. The first one is always puzzling to the reader because of the tendency to make every detail of a parable applicable or intentionally significant. An unprincipled judge influenced neither by religious nor social motives, was so hounded by a poor, unfriended widow with her pleas for justice that he yielded from sheer weariness to her appeal and befriended her. By her persistency she secured her boon. Back of that, however, was necessarily a confidence in the essential righteousness of her course, when once taken up by the judge, and in the effectiveness of the method when continued long enough. These are the qualities enforced by the parable. If one of such a type as the judge can by such persistence be moved to do justice, how surely will the unremitting appeal of a believing heart, laying its cares and trials before a kind and loving heavenly Father receive attention and response. "But how few there are," added the Master, "who have that sturdy, determined faith which upholds them in such a persistent approach to God."

The parable of the Pharisee and the publican illustrates a different aspect of prayer and was probably uttered at some other occasion than the one which evoked the parable of the unrighteous judge. It advocated a spirit of trustful humility. The illustration was perfect. The Pharisee was professionally a man of prayer. He never failed to perform this duty, wherever he might be. Its regular execution was a kind of badge of respectability, in which he gloried. It was possible, although of course not necessary nor even customarily true, that a Pharisee could go through the forms of prayer without sharing in the least in its spirit. The Pharisee in the parable represented at once all phases of the wrong attitude in prayer. He was not standing in the presence of God but exhibiting himself to men; he was not giving expression to his need, but declaring his merits; he was not humble, but rather demanding a recognition of his worth. His stay in the temple was to no effect. He had not prayed at all. The publican, of whom the haughty Pharisee would take no notice, was the one after all who made an acceptable prayer. He recognized the goodness and power of God, he expressed his sense of bitter need, he plead for forgiveness and God honored his prayer. Prayer is not a self-glorifying patronage of God, but a sincere plea for forgiveness and fellowship.

It is natural that at some time the rulers should have tried to entrap Jesus into a declaration regarding divorce. There was a standing controversy over the interpretation and observance of Deut. 24:1, the one school allowing divorce for infidelity, the other and more prevalent school permitting it for almost any form of incompatibility, and at the caprice of the husband. As usual Jesus did not permit Himself to be identified with either party, but emphasized the great principle of the sacred and indissoluble union prefigured by the conditions of sex, sanctioned by the blessing of God and manifested in the growing oneness of sympathies, interests and purposes of a true married life.

The ideal was too great even for the disciples. It has required the Christian centuries to give it full embodiment. Jesus recognized this but was content to delay, knowing that His ideal would be the standard of the days to come. Not personal predilections but the interests of the kingdom of God would finally determine this and all related questions.

How gladly from such experiences would Jesus have turned to greet the mothers with their little ones, brought to Him for His blessing. No wonder He resented the well-meant but officious interference of His followers. The children were His natural friends and the type of His followers.

Chapter 37.—Conditions of Loyal Service.

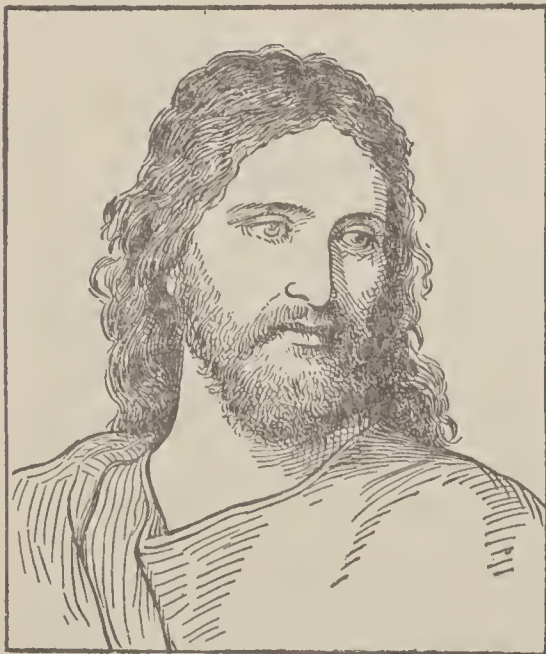
Mt. 19:16—20:16; Mk. 10:32-45.

As the journey toward Jerusalem continued the relations between Jesus and His immediate followers were at once closer and more distant. He revealed His tender affection by many a thoughtful word or deed; at times, however, He seemed unapproachable. The realistic touch of Mk. 10:32 suggests this attitude. As the company walked along Jesus was at the head, step and gesture betokening the pressure of His emotions. He knew well the crisis before Him. They could appreciate it in part, for they realized the danger which confronted them all, but doubtless they felt, after the raising of Lazarus, if not before, that His resourcefulness was adequate to any emergency, and that they need not be weighed down with fear. His manner, nevertheless, was out of the ordinary. It awakened the astonishment of the Twelve and a sense of awe in others.

It was at this time of expectancy that the triple tradition of the Gospels locates one of the most suggestive incidents of the Master's career. There came to meet Him a young man of prominence who aroused the favorable attention of Jesus because of his attractive

personality and his genuine enthusiasm for righteousness. He asked Jesus in courteous fashion what he should do, what ideal he should fulfil in order to make sure of eternal life. It was a natural query. The thinkers of that day were united in asserting that the will of God was to be fulfilled by performing a certain set of deeds. They differed in regard to those which were of chief and vital importance. Having seen repeated evidences of the insight and honesty of Jesus, the young ruler desired His judgment regarding this disputed question.

The response of Jesus had a two-fold application. The ruler had used one of those commonplace complimentary forms of address which are the small change of kindly natures, having little or no meaning. Jesus seemed to resent such a usage in His case, or else to disapprove the reference to Him as an authority. "Why ask me about the *summum bonum*? God is the only



Head of Christ.

From Hoffman's picture of "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler."

embodiment of the good. Study His revealed will."

When he asked which set of commandments should be kept, the young man was not unreasonable. To a well-trained Jew there were commandments innumerable, some directly Scriptural, others Rabbinical, but all obligatory. Jesus referred him to the ethical portions of the Decalogue, but virtually said, "Live up to your ideal of uprightness." The

young man had ever been an exemplary observer of the law. He could truthfully say without hesitation that from his earliest youth he had so lived. Jesus saw that he was a man of great

capacity for discipleship, but as yet unacquainted with sacrifice. He wished for the higher life but not with any burning passion. He set him a keen test which the young man would not meet, a hard condition but a necessary one for His disciples. Those who did not value His companionship and His ideals of life far beyond the comforts or opportunities which wealth affords were no fit followers of His.

Jesus regretted the defection of the young ruler, and remarked to His disciples that the possession of great wealth was a serious menace to the spiritual progress of men, almost insurmountable. To that age as to our own wealth seemed a most desirable possession. The Master's declaration was depressing, so He hastened to qualify its force by reminding His hearers of the power and patience of God.

It was not unnatural for the disciples who had truly risked their present and their future on their confidence in His leadership to betray a self-complacent curiosity regarding their share with Him in the glory of the future. Jesus answered them in kind. They would indeed receive satisfying returns of manifold value as regards relationship or possessions or places of influence, yet with persecutions and for spiritual ends. The substance would be acceptable; the form surprising. Many a transformation would be seen, those who seemed to be foremost being the last in achievement.

The parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard who were hired at all hours, even at the eleventh, yet received, each one, the same sum for the work which he did, emphasizes the fact that square dealing is not always according to measure. What a man really deserves cannot be exactly determined by hours of service or by specific acts of loyalty. The principal factor is the wise and kindly judgment of the employer. "God," as Bruce says, "does not love a legal spirit" nor proceed by contract in His apportionment of blessing. Let every man be single-minded in his devotion and leave the outcome to his heavenly Father.

For the third time, according to the Gospel records—perhaps actually many times oftener—Jesus made mention of the coming crucifixion. This time He seemed to see clearly the character of the coming test, its severity and its limit. As before, they could not comprehend it.

But all realized that some climax was at hand. All believed that it could be no other than a triumphant one. The moment was seized for a request which the others of the Twelve properly regarded as highly presumptuous and unfair, but which was none the less an evidence of noble faith. The mother of the sons of Zebedee had probably been one of those who ministered so gladly to the needs of Jesus and His company. Her confidence in Him was absolute, despite the sorry conditions under which all were living. To her these privations were only momentary. Her ambition for her sons was that of continuing loyalty to Him in His greatest estate, that they might still remain His confidential supporters. She probably thought of the opportunity for usefulness and association rather than for glory.

Jesus queried whether they would gladly share His experiences of good or evil, joy or woe. They assented, little realizing the full meaning of their pledge, yet awaiting a real ordeal. Jesus revealed the folly of the request and declared that no one could determine the rank of future disciples. Let him who sought for honor in the kingdom of God be ambitious to be serviceable.

As a matter of fact the great leader of the Christian cause in the generation yet to be was still unknown to that company, and next to him stood Peter rather than a son of Zebedee. God does not permit men to block out the way of His providence. He alone can see the end from the beginning. To each faithful servant He will apportion that which is his due.

Chapter 38.—Jesus at Jericho and Bethany.

Lu. 18:35—19:28; Jo. 11:55—12:11.

To the other two pairs of cities indissolubly connected with the active life of Jesus, the narrative we are to consider adds one more. We naturally unite in thought the birthplace, Bethlehem, with Nazareth, His boyhood home. Jerusalem, the capital city and goal of His activity, suggests Capernaum, the working center of His ministry in Palestine. Jericho and Bethany have an association purely personal and quite accidental, yet they will ever be coupled in the mind of a reverent student of the life of Jesus because of the series of significant events with which they are connected. To the student, even to the traveler, of to-day, Jericho seems of slight importance, a good place to hurry through, a resting-place only in case of extreme need. In the days of Jesus Jericho was a beautiful city, attrac-



Plain of Jericho.

tive as a winter resort, well populated and busied with the traffic of a natural center of collection and distribution for a considerable desert trade. That a customs officer of high rank had his residence there indicated the importance of Jericho to the government.

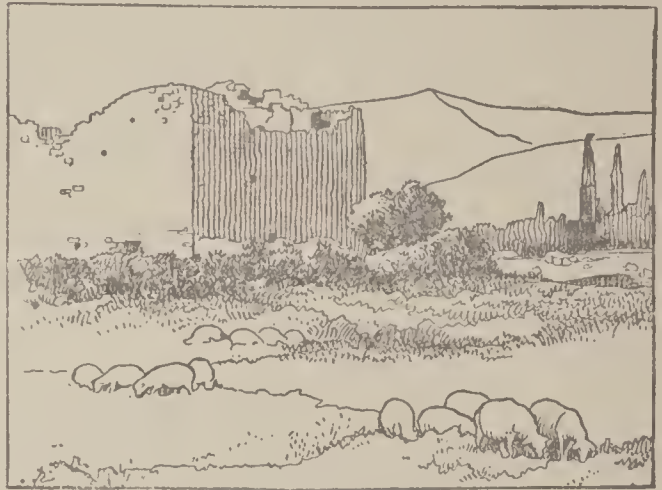
The exact order of the incidents which took place at Jericho cannot be determined from the data available in the Gospels. The independence of each narrative is quite striking. In relating the story of the healing of the blindness at Jericho the first Gospel mentions two blind men, the others only one; the third Gospel repre-

sents Jesus as performing the act of healing just as the company was entering Jericho, the others describe it as happening at the time of departure. Such differences are actually a testimony to the fidelity of the narrators to their sources of information. They tend to make us surer than ever of the reality of the two incidents described as occurring at Jericho.

One of these was the healing of a blind man, Bartimæus by name, a beggar. He was not necessarily an outcast. From the narrative, he would rather seem to be a devout, intelligent and loyal son of Israel, and a man of some influence. To ask alms of the charitable seemed in those days to involve no stigma, probably because the giving of alms to the deserving or helpless poor was esteemed an act of real religious value. Bartimæus had heard much about Jesus of Nazareth, about His graciousness, His wonderful power over all kinds of disease, His message of the coming of the kingdom of God, and with all his heart he believed that this Jesus was indeed the Christ who was to be. He waited anxiously the moment when he might crave from Him a personal blessing and become His earnest follower. Hearing that Jesus was about to pass, he could not contain himself for joy, and began to plead at the top of his voice for recognition. When could Jesus resist such a plea! He stopped and called for Bartimæus. His was a plain case. It required little deliberation. Jesus saw his eager faith, restored his sight, and added another to the train of those who would not let Him pass out of their company.

But in the streets of Jericho an even greater wonder took place. A collector of taxes determined to live a life of active righteousness. As well, in the current opinion, might a leopard change his spots. To hold such a position, particularly to be a chief collector, required a combination of qualities. He would need to be intelligent, shrewd, a good manager and judge of men, unscrupulous, ready for the sake of making money to ignore social pleasures or national prejudices, a man

who refused to allow religion to control his movements. He had heard of Jesus as one who did not despise his kind, and was eager to see Him. Being undersized, he ran ahead of the throng and climbed into the branches of a tree by the roadside, so as to have a full vision. He saw that which changed his whole life. In the calm gaze of Jesus there was sympathy, friendship, rebuke, pity, invitation, encouragement—enough to make Zachæus see his past life in all its naked selfishness, and to determine on the spot to begin anew with higher ideals. That his conversion was a genuine one he proved, after Jesus had entered his house as an honored guest. Of his own accord



The Traditional House of Zachæus.

he agreed to make ample restitution for his exactions, and henceforth to recognize the obligation of service and friendship. Such character miracles Jesus was working every day.

The parable of the pounds illustrated in a new form the basis of divine judgment in the heavenly kingdom. The one who is faithful to his trust, however small it may be, is the one who will be given greater responsibilities and honors: the one who betrays a trust, or fails to do his best in promoting that which is given over to his care, will be deprived of a share in the development of the kingdom. To preserve a talent without putting it to its fullest use is criminal neglect. God endows us for usefulness.

The objective point of the journey of Jesus was the home at Bethany where dwelt the three whom He dearly loved. Only through the fourth Gospel do we know this, although Matthew and Mark relate the

story of that evening. A feast was given in honor of Jesus, and perhaps to celebrate the joy of the family at the restoration of their brother from the dead. Each sister makes acknowledgment in her own way of her debt of gratitude to the Master. Martha got up a supper and took charge of its serving. Mary seized the opportunity to make a fine exhibit of her uncalculating, unmeasured love. A costly box of precious ointment, purchased perhaps for the anointing of her brother's body, she poured upon the head and feet of Jesus. It was the best token at hand of a whole-souled love. She sought to show Jesus the highest honor while He was yet with them.

There were good men there who took a practical view of the act. They held it to be a sinful waste. But Jesus held that such devotion was beyond price and its manifestation worth the lavish gift.

Thus Jesus encouraged the best in every one, however manifested, whether by faith in Him as Messiah, by the choice of righteousness, or by a passionate loyalty. Whatever gives expression to our noblest selves gives Him greatest honor and elicits His ready response.

Chapter 39.—In Training for Apostleship. A Review.

The life of Jesus from the time when He left Galilee to go northward until He reached Jerusalem for the final week of His ministry was dominated by one distinctive purpose. At the very outset of the period He became assured of the settled attitude of His followers. They were wholly ready to range themselves deliberately with Him against the world in which they moved, which took its cue in matters religious from the scribes and Pharisees. This they were willing to do at any cost because they had become convinced by accumulated personal proofs that their beloved Master was the Messiah whom prophets had foretold, for whom their nation had

long been wistfully looking, whose message to Israel was that of God Himself. Such a conviction on their part gave to Jesus an assured basis for the furtherance of His plans for the kingdom. He had not alone a distinct body of loyal supporters, but a group of disciples whose one aim was to grasp and execute His plans. Whatever He would formulate they would try to accomplish. He could therefore turn His energies toward their education as true disciples who could rightly interpret His spirit and their training for future apostolic responsibility. In this predominant purpose we find the key to the events and teachings of the last active year of Jesus' ministry.

During much of the time the company which surrounded Jesus was on the move, often by itself, occasionally, as in earlier days, among the cities and villages of Judea and the region beyond Jordan. The first of these journeys, made desirable by the active enmity of the rulers, was through Tyre and Zidon northward, thence across the Lebanons and down through Decapolis, terminating at the Lake. An immediate collision with the Pharisees caused or hastened another withdrawal northward, this time merely to the region in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi. It was a journey forever made notable by the three important events which took place with little delay—the decisive questioning which gave occasion for Peter's noble avowal of His Messiahship, the transfiguration in the presence of the three, and the initiation of a course of apostolic instruction. Our sources only hint at the actual teaching of the days of privacy that followed as the company strolled leisurely and unobtrusively southward. The true meaning of discipleship was apparently the theme of those blessed days of fellowship, days which really began to create the apostles that were to be. Palestine, small as it is, is a land where groups of people may readily avoid publicity. The circle of disciples gradually worked their way toward Jerusalem but without public notice. Jesus made His appearance at the feast

of tabernacles, where His noble discourses concerning spiritual refreshing and illumination and freedom thrilled the hearts of many. His bold declarations regarding Himself excited the rulers to sudden rage, but He departed unharmed.

It was clear to Him then that His ministry could but result in a martyrdom. The remaining few months were given up to a renewal of His active ministry of healing and teaching, mainly in the region beyond Jordan, where full freedom of movement was still afforded and the Pharisees were less hostile. Even this ministry was one which was primarily important to the disciple-group, a continuous object-lesson in true ministration. Its objects were forwarded by the sending ahead of the seventy messengers to the villages about to be visited. During the period Jesus went twice to Jerusalem, once to attend the feast of dedication, when the man born blind was healed and the wonderful allegories of the Shepherd and the Door expressed, as well as the infuriating declaration of a unique relationship with God. Thenceforth the rulers were ready to put Him to death. He took pains to emphasize in conversation the sharp distinction between Pharisaic religion and His own, and to declare by parable and precept the true attitude of God toward a sinful world. The death of Lazarus and his raising from the dead brought Jesus from His retirement, but only intensified the hostility of the rulers, so that He again withdrew until the pass-over. When this was at hand His company began a gradual movement toward Jerusalem which gave occasion for much notable teaching and many helpful incidents. With the passage through Jericho and the arrival at Bethany the period concludes.

Its significance is manifest in varied ways. The Jesus of this year, even more than before, was a self-contained, confident, bold interpreter of the mind of God, exhibiting no less of the gentleness and patience and tenderness so natural to Him, but in more striking fashion, the steadfastness, energy and vigor which were

equally His characteristics. He would face His foes with calmness when danger meant opportunity; He ever refused to act impulsively.

From the Gospels of Matthew and Mark we gain the impression that the year was a period of waiting for the crisis which Jesus calmly foresaw. A vision was ever open to His great soul. A sense of duty drove Him on, the obligation of saying and doing that which would prepare His followers and His nation for what was to come. It was therefore also a period of active, zealous, helpful companionship and ministry. To acquaint His intimates with His standards of discipleship, to set their gaze far ahead unto the active years that were to come, to give them a practical knowledge of evangelistic methods and to bring home to the people at large a brighter vision of the God of love, a sense of the judgment near at hand and of the need of repentance—these were the ends He seemed to have immediately in view.

With what graciousness and wisdom He did this the Gospels of Luke and John enable us to know. Each emphasizes in its peculiar way the important teachings of the period, the one regarding God and His service, the other concerning Himself and His work. Without their testimony the inner life of Jesus would be a mystery.

Jesus was sustained during these months by the joyful certainty that He could rely upon a body of disciples full of promise though few in number. The attitude of the nation became of less consequence. He met all sorts of opposition, grading from murderous hatred down to lofty patronage, but had evidence also of responsive hearts among all classes, from wealthy Pharisees to loving mothers with their little children. This was enough to convince Him of the ultimate triumph of His Gospel.

His disciples could not quite rid themselves of their hopes of a brilliant outcome of such power and wisdom as He unquestionably possessed. But He drilled into them the fundamentals of apostleship; the fatherhood of

God, the equality in His sight of man, the nature of sin and its consequences, the essentials of discipleship, the value of steadfastness and assurance.

Then, as to-day, Jesus sought to gain His ends by raising up disciples after His own pattern. The scribes had a tradition that if one Jew could perfectly keep the whole law for even a day the kingdom of God would come. With eleven reliable disciples Jesus was ready to face the world. Were those who call themselves His to-day half so faithful, His work would quickly be accomplished.

Chapter 40.—Jesus Claiming Messiahship.

Mt. 21:1-19.

At last Jesus was ready to enter Jerusalem. He had been there often before, but never with such an inflexible purpose. Heretofore when His ministrations or teachings had provoked bitter opposition, Jesus had quietly withdrawn to await a time that should be more opportune. This time He did not expect to depart. He knew that the close of His active ministry was at hand. The passover feast would mark the end. But there was yet a week of largest opportunity, when throngs would once more hear His words and come under the spell of His gracious presence.

To make the utmost of the few remaining days, to declare Himself unmistakably as the Messiah, to draw a sharp line between His working ideals and those of the official class, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes, to impress the people in words of solemn warning with the urgency of repentance and reform, and to prepare His own disciples by tender acts of fellowship and by winged words of counsel for the days of responsibility before them—these were some of the definite aims which He must have had in mind.

Jesus was not a fugitive brought to bay, desperately

employing any expedient for prolonging the day of freedom; He was rather the deliberately patriotic son of Israel facing the sacrifice which was essential to the redemption of His people and of humanity. History has never shown a more splendid example of deliberate devotion, foreseeing the inevitable and calmly facing it.

The importance of these closing days cannot readily be overestimated. This is attested, in part, by the prominence accorded by each Gospel writer to the incidents of the week. Nearly one-third of the Gospel according to Matthew, fully a third of Mark, about a quarter of the Gospel of Luke and almost one-half of the fourth Gospel are devoted to that which happened after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Each aims to make a real impression. No adequate conception of the period is obtainable from any one writer, however, so many-sided was the activity of Jesus. But all agree in representing Jesus as assuming a masterfulness, an aggressiveness, a self-assertion rarely characterizing His personality.

Bethany, where Jesus and His disciples had been lodging, was not far from Jerusalem, less than an hour's journey on foot. On the first day of the week He set out for the holy city. The rumor quickly spread that He was approaching and a great multitude took palm branches and went forth to meet Him. According to the fourth Gospel, this throng was composed chiefly of pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for passover week. They were eager to see and welcome Him, so as to give Him confidence to assume His Messianic dignity and duty. They fully believed that the hour had come (Jo. 12:13) for His open avowal of His mission.

Jesus too, acted as one who had made up His mind to a course of procedure. His approach was deliberate. When near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples to a place near at hand to borrow an ass's colt on which He might ride into the city. The animal was an important and distinctive accessory. Jesus rode, not to spare Himself the strain of the toilsome ascent, but

that all who witnessed His entry might be reminded of the well-known and oft-repeated prediction of the prophet Zechariah about the coming of the Messianic King. This was one of the first deliberate actions implying a decision to assume Messianic dignity, which the disciples had witnessed. No wonder it aroused their sudden enthusiasm. The fourth Gospel declares that they did not fully understand the significance of the act until much later. They were acting from an impulse, but one that was proper, natural and irresistible. Divesting themselves of their mantles, they hastened to spread them on the back of the colt that He might sit thereon. The welcoming multitude surrounded Him and all proceeded toward Jerusalem. Some spread their outer garments in the roadway; others, seeing the branches which a part of the throng was using, hastened to cut other branches from the trees and wave them.

It was a well-meant but embarrassing homage. The idea of the multitude, even of the disciples, and that of Jesus were quite divergent. While they anticipated His immediate assumption of national leadership, He just as distinctly offered Himself as the meek and unambitious Prince of Peace. He well knew how transitory this popular homage was and how little He could rely upon it. Nevertheless, He accepted it, notwithstanding the protests of some of the onlooking Pharisees, because it served "to emphasize the claim which He now wished without reserve or ambiguity to make in Jerusalem."

As the jubilant procession swept along, the active mind of Jesus viewed in anticipation the lamentable outcome of it all and as He came in full view of the beautiful city of His fathers, the city of sacred memories, and persistent hopes, the conviction of its present uselessness for religious advance, and of its festering corruption but slightly veiled by its outward glory, brought tears of love and sympathy and regret to His eyes. Jerusalem was dear to every son of Israel, the dearest spot on earth, but to Jesus, who had such a

marvelous insight into the significance of institutions and ideas, its impending and richly-deserved fate was nothing less than a tragedy.

The city was greatly stirred by the public entry of Jesus, yet no one interfered, the rulers because they



Modern Jerusalem, from the Mount of Olives.

feared the multitude, the Romans because they regarded it as a passing incident of the feast.

The details of the remainder of this eventful day are somewhat obscure. According to Mark, Jesus simply went to the temple, looked about Him sadly and returned for the night to Bethany. Matthew and Luke are less explicit, but permit the assignment of the cleansing to the first or second day of passion week.

There will always be a chance for an honest difference of opinion regarding the cleansing of the temple. As a significant declaration of what was befitting the house of God, its most fitting occasion was at the outset of the active ministry, where John records it. Its repetition at this time would seem justified as a symbolic reassertion of the standards of religion for which Jesus had ever stood.

There was a noble, unshrinking, courageous assertion of Himself this day, on the part of Jesus which the Christian may well ponder and imitate. It was an assertion that meant repression, a triumph which involved sacrifice, a glory that could only be fulfilled through suffering and shame.

Chapter 41.—Jesus' Messiahship Rejected.

Mt. 21: 23—22: 14; Mk. 11: 12-14, 20-25.

How much Jesus actually did at Jerusalem during the day following the triumphal entry can only be conjectured. Only the second cleansing of the temple could be allotted to it. The narrative of Luke implies that each day (19: 47) found Him teaching the thronging multitudes, while Matthew's Gospel (21: 14) hints at His old-time activity in healing. Many things must really have happened of which no direct record has been preserved.

The writers of the Synoptic Gospels emphasize by what they include and ignore the symbolical significance of the acts of Jesus at this time. The striking assumptions of the manner of His entrance into the sacred city were only enforced by the incidents of the cursing of the fig-tree and the cleansing of the temple. Each in turn was the dramatic assertion of kingly dominance.

The incident of the fig-tree, treated as a petulant act of disappointment, seems incredible and wholly opposed to the habitual action or point of view of Jesus. He could never have vented upon a tree the spleen which He was never known to manifest upon an erring man. It would seem certain that Jesus had a purpose in His pronouncement. His act was an unspoken allegory; His desire to set the disciples to thinking about His meaning. As a figure it seemed to illustrate the judgment awaiting the Jewish nation and to suggest its justification. But the personal application made by Jesus was quite distinct. The confidence with which He had decreed its withering away was a plea for steadfastness and sturdiness of faith, mountain-moving in character.

It is evident that at this time Jesus was in practical command of the situation at Jerusalem. Had He made a bold, unreserved proclamation of kingly leadership and appealed to the populace to rally around Him, a host would have responded without delay to the call.

Nor would such a movement have been destitute of a chance of success. What actually happened in the year 66 might well have happened now. The garrison was not large and the people were deeply exasperated at the despotic ways of Pilate.

But the principles and practises of Jesus were so offensive to the religious leaders that they regarded Him as worse for them than Roman domination. They did not care for His leadership and determined to



Mosque of Omar.

From a photograph.

This beautiful mosque occupies the site of the temple proper as it was built by Solomon and as it stood in the time of Christ. It stands on an elevated platform, reached by flights of steps surmounted by porches with pointed arches. Two of these porches are seen in the picture.

prevent it. The history of the next two days became a record of continuous attempts in one form or another to overawe or compromise or expose Him to public ridicule and thus to alienate His following.

The first move was made while He was engaged in teaching. The chief priests and elders, members of the authoritative Sanhedrin, challenged His authority for doing such unconventional deeds, some of which called sharply in question their own methods and standards. They did not deny His influence; it was incontrovertible. Jesus made a remarkable reply, at once a return for their challenge and a real reply. He did not merely put His critics on the defensive, but suggested the answer that real spirituality accredits itself. A prophet needs no diploma. Had they been manful enough to meet Him squarely He might have explained Himself, realizing that His thoughts were beyond the compre-

hension of such legally-petrified intellects, but their wilful opportunism made Him disregard them altogether. Perplexities He would unravel; stupidity He could condone; but wilfulness He exposed without mercy. Having silenced His critics He proceeded to declare that even publicans and harlots would get into the kingdom before them, for people of that class had recognized that John had a heavenly message and had listened to it and repented. The professed leaders of Judaism were always declaring loudly their obedience to God, but they never really obeyed His call; the sinners refused at first to hearken but finally were loyal disciples.

In three striking parables Jesus went on to declare the ominous significance of the spiritual blindness of these leaders. Like the son who was full of promises, but did no work, they were inducing the nation, with all its enthusiasm, to set itself against the invitation of Jesus.

By this exposure of their insincerity, Jesus knew that He had given mortal offence to the leaders. He then uttered a parable which virtually exhibited them as defying even divine authority. A householder took great pains to make ready a vineyard for cultivation, sparing nothing which might ensure its fruitfulness. After a reasonable interval, during which the vineyard is maturing its fruit, he sends to the leaseholders for his share of the produce. But his messengers, one after another, are beaten and sent back empty-handed. Finally the owner sends his son, thinking that the vine-dressers cannot fail to show him respect. But they argue that by his death the vineyard will become their possession and so put him to death. But the owner comes, punishes them and lets the vineyard to others.

The parable cut to the quick. Its meaning was broadly evident. Israel's leaders were as selfish, as heartless, as brutal as the tenants, equally oblivious of God's just demands, equally ready to kill His last and nearest representative. Their persistence in their

malevolent purpose would be the sign that their control of Israel would be brought to a sudden end. They realize that Jesus is aware of their attitude toward Him and retire with hearts fierce with hatred.

The third parable of the series is regarded by some as not originally spoken by Jesus at this time; yet it cannot be regarded as inappropriate, even in the detail of the wedding-garment. It is a parable of grace involving judgment. God is very patient and generous. He invites every one and gives him repeated opportunity. But persistent indifference to His call or a lack of personal holiness or reverence will be fatal. Such cannot rightfully expect to share in His glory.

The outstanding characteristic of Jesus at this time was His self-control. With a nation within His grasp, He remained perfectly loyal to His principles. It was the victory of the third temptation once more won. He would rather fail to carry leaders and nation with Him than be false to the highest possible ideals.

Chapter 42.—Christ's Last Conflict with the Pharisees.

Mt. 22 : 15—23 : 39.

After the bold words of Jesus to the Pharisees and others in the presence of the multitude and their retirement in confusion, there could be no further question of the relationship between Him and them. They hated Him with a bitterness which was all the more intense because they not only disapproved His ideas, but realized His mercilessly keen insight into their selfishness and irreligion. It caused His foes to drop their customary animosity for one another in the common anxiety to make way with Him. When they departed in confusion, they had broken with Jesus forever.

Naturally any subsequent contact was that of opposition. At all costs He must be put out of the way. The leaders knew their Jerusalem and the fickleness of the applauding throng. Let Jesus take but one false step

and He would really endanger His influence. Let Him declare Himself in opposition to popular sentiment on some matter of fanatical significance and His leadership would instantly be at an end. They laid for Him in conference some very clever traps, which only His straightforwardness and perfect comprehension of their attitude enabled Him to avoid. But to turn the tables and involve them to their undoing was relatively easy for Him. His mastery of the situation was never questionable.

Their first scheme was astute and plausible. The leaders did not themselves appear as principals, but sent younger men to entrap Him into a declaration on the subject of the payment of tribute to Rome. These inquirers sought to ingratiate themselves by flattery. It shows that they had no real knowledge of Jesus, if they thought that their true spirit was hidden from Him. He soon disillusioned them, declaring them to be sharers in a wicked conspiracy.

To the question He could not be silent, yet it was a dangerous one to answer. A reply in the affirmative would infuriate the people who hated the poll-tax for both political and religious reasons; a reply in the negative would have been the basis of a political charge before the suspicious procurator.

Most students regard the answer of Jesus as eminently shrewd and satisfying, recognizing a twofold sphere of authority without essential conflict, admitting a proper response to the claims of an earthly sovereign and declaring the necessity of serving God as well. Some think, however, that His failure to satisfy the demands of the fierce anti-Roman zealots in Jerusalem on this question may have intensified, if not occasioned, their savage call for Barabbas, instead of Jesus at His trial. But it fairly answered His opponents, who paid Him the tribute of an unwilling admiration as they departed.

The Sadducees fared no better. They too tried to put Jesus in a ridiculous light and framed for Him a ques-

tion to which He could scarcely give attention without detriment. If seven brothers in succession married the same woman, whose wife would she be after the resurrection. The reply of Jesus was remarkable alike for its simplicity and grandeur. He wondered that they who presumed to be men of insight should ask such a question. It proved that they understood neither the nature of things Divine nor the testimony of Scripture. God transforms His own into spiritual beings for whom the relationships of the flesh become the broader and finer relationship of the spirit. Their heaven was simply a continuing earth; God's heaven was a new life indeed. Alluding then to their boasted skepticism regarding the future life, Jesus shows that it is presupposed by the Scripture on which the Sadducean sect particularly relied, the Pentateuch. The words of comfort from the section known as "The Bush," imply clearly that God continued to be in active relationship with those who had passed away long before. A verbal argument like this was particularly effective before an audience like His, accustomed to keen, strict, deductive interpretation from the very wording of Scripture. No wonder that a scribe blurted out a commendatory word.

On the next incident the Gospels of Matthew and Mark give a varying impression. According to the former, the lawyer, like those who had preceded him, was anxious to entrap Jesus into saying something to His own hurt; Mark implies that the questioner was sincere and thoughtful. It was a legitimate question. Every Jew had to establish a working classification of legal requirements according to their importance, so that in case of a conflict, the more important might be obeyed. In general the order of the Decalogue was accepted as the standard. With His first statement all Judaism practically agreed. The novel feature in His reply lay in the equality given to love for one's neighbor, and, by implication, the minor value assigned to details of worship, ceremonial purity, fasting, etc. His reply thus finely summarized His whole work and teaching. The

young man showed by his answer a quick comprehension of Jesus and sympathy with Him. He was truly close to an acceptance of His leadership. One wonders whether he too "went away sorrowful."

Jesus then asked the Pharisees a question, not probably in order to puzzle or silence His critics, but rather to give them a more reasonable and helpful idea of the Messiah. They were accustomed (Jo. 7:41, 42) to object to His Messiahship on the ground that He was not of Davidic descent. By a question He brings out the current view, then seeks to show that the Scriptures really emphasize a broader relationship, that of sonship, a relation which ignores the physical but urges a spiritual kinship.

So far above His opponents did these replies show Him to be that thereafter no one dared to catechize Jesus.

But He was not done with them. Before departing Jesus made use of His opportunity to declare unmistakably the difference between His type of righteousness and that of the Jewish leaders. Mark's report seems meagre, Luke scatters the material, Matthew collects at this point His whole body of similar declarations. That He made a "weighty, deliberate, full, final testimony" seems wholly probable. The exact portion of it spoken at this time need not be distinguished. It was a scathing arraignment of the leaders for their calculating hypocrisy, their real ungodliness, their deception of the people, their burdensome ceremonialism, their self-indulgence, their hostility to truth and hatred of light, their utter incompetence to recognize ministries or messengers or anything else Divine. A terrible rebuke, but justly deserved by the great mass of self-styled rulers of Judaism.

The impression made upon all minds by the study of this day in the life of Jesus is that of His greatness and His consistency in act and utterance. He consistently concluded an active career, reaffirming the great truths and principles with which He began.

Chapter 43.—The Close of Christ's Public Ministry.

Mk. 12 : 41-44 ; Jo. 12 : 20-50.

After declaring with emphatic deliberation the impressive series of woes upon the religious leaders of Judaism, Jesus did not leave the temple, but seating Himself in the court of the women, He watched those who were bringing their gifts to the treasury. The offerings were dropped through funnel-shaped openings in the wall into boxes fastened to the wall on the inside. It is not probable that Jesus was able to see clearly the exact character of each offering, yet its general amount He could infer from the circumstances. The rich men took good care to give an opportunity for a bystander to observe; it was the poor widow who was most likely to make her gift modestly. Hers was a little gift, yet greater than any other, for it was all that she had and on the same scale theirs would have been vastly larger in amount. It was greater, too, because she gave wholly for love and they from a sense of duty or by reason of the pressure of habit or the desire of repute. It was a noble trait in Jesus that He was so keen to see the finer side of human character and to commend its significance. This woman stood for genuine, unmeasured, unselfish faith.

Jesus appeared in an attractive light when sought by the Greeks who were in Jerusalem. These men were probably proselytes from the great commercial centres, men of intelligence and character who had come into contact with the best types of Judaism and with its lofty ideals and had become worshipers. They were tolerated and even encouraged by the strict Jews, although not recognized as members of that household of faith unless they were circumcised. Such men would be naturally attracted by what they heard on every hand about Jesus, and desirous of seeing Him.

For some reason Philip hesitated to introduce them to Jesus. He confided in Andrew and the two together made the request that He would meet the Greeks. The

writer of the fourth Gospel introduced the anecdote for the sake of its light upon the inner life of Jesus, hence we have no report of the interview, but only of the effect of their request upon Jesus. He gave His disciples a glimpse of His real self. It was as if He had a sudden vision of the ingathering that would surely come in the future and of the supreme sacrifice which would hasten its appearance. It was a vision of glory, but of a glory won in the spirit of service and by the heroism of unselfishness. Such a service He was ever craving for His disciples and in it He would set them a leadership and offer them the winning of a noble pre-eminence.

The turns of thought attributed to Jesus are not wholly clear. John 12:27 can be interpreted as an appeal for deliverance or, perhaps more naturally, as a firm declaration of deliberate consecration. Jesus realized at that moment in a supreme degree the significance of His approaching death. He saw it as a vision of a great uprising of men and women of patience, courage, faithfulness and zeal, of sacrificial temper and of godly lives. It nerved Him for the struggle and enabled Him to confront it with decision. Assured of divine approval He expressed the other aspect of the significance of His death, its victory over the power of evil which so often seems to hold the world in control. Such power is destined to be broken. The cross, from being an emblem of shame and humiliation, will become a symbol of the victory of righteousness.

In these words are expressed the heart of the Gospel and the hope of Christianity. The crucified Christ has been and still is the greatest power in history. His influence is demonstrably the most pervasive of any personality that ever lived, profoundly modifying the trend of national instincts or ambitions, kindling noble emotions in the most unpromising of hearts, transforming the worst of lives, utilizing to their fullest capacity the promising traits of men, inspiring everywhere the heroic desire for unselfish discipleship.

What a pity, as the fourth Gospel declares, that His

generation was blinded to this greatest value of the personality of Jesus. It persisted in misunderstanding and underestimating Him. Its leaders were like men groping about in a darkness only aggravated by tiny rays of light, when a few steps away, free to their access, was a glorious and attractive world bathed in brilliant sunshine. They knew just enough about Jesus to cause them to reject the opportunity to learn more. This failure was more than an accident or a mistake; it was a tragedy.

The fourth Gospel fitly closes the story of the period of the repeated self-revelation on the part of Jesus to His people with a summary of the reasons for its failure to accomplish His purpose. The prophets, it remarks, had foretold just such an outcome. Jesus was not accepted, partly because of the very simplicity and straightforwardness with which He preached, partly because, as men are constituted, it is inevitable that many close their ears and harden their hearts to the truth, partly because many will not endure the cost of discipleship. There are many Pharisees who agree in opinion with better men, but will not risk an expulsion from the comfortable synagogue for the sake of maintaining their convictions. Of these reasons the first two seem the more historically true. The Jews as a race were quite ready for sacrifice, but their prepossessions and inveterate prejudices rendered them unwilling to be hospitable to truth in fresh forms. They would have been quickly and devotedly loyal to a Christ of their imaginations; they despised and rejected the actual Christ.

The pathos of the outcome is in the fact that those who rejected Jesus condemned themselves to sit in darkness. They drew away from the normal and ready source of spiritual light. Jesus spent no time in enforcing judgments; He gave Himself to the positive work of the redemption of men. He put in their way every possible reason for repentance and reform. His appeals were clear and constant and sincere. Their

real rejection would be the gravest charge to be laid against men.

That which gave significance to the life of Jesus makes the real importance of the life of every follower of His. No life can be wasted by being granted to service; a surrender is an assurance of its glorious completion. The sacrificial spirit in the disciple no less than the Master is the one temper which ensures a real success.

Chapter 44.—Christ's Prophetic Discourse on Mount Olivet.

Mt. chs. 24, 25; 26: 1-5, 14-16.

The day of public testimony drew near its close. The Master had spoken His last word to the multitude and to His opponents, but He had yet much upon His heart. His thought was for His disciples whose days of teaching were drawing near. Going out of the temple with His



View on the Mount of Olives.

disciples about Him, He left the city and went directly to His favorite refuge for resting and quiet conversation, the Mount of Olives, perhaps the most truly sacred spot to-day for those who seek to reproduce in their own experience the impressions of the active life of Jesus.

From that hillside the remark of His disciples was inevitable. His words of impending judgment were

ringing in their ears. As they pondered them, their perplexity increased. The stately, massive temple was at once a symbol and a pledge to the Jews of that day of the permanence of Judaism. Herod had erected upon the foundations which he had inherited from ancient days a structure which became a wonder of the world, impressive, splendid, exquisite. It ranked with the masterpieces of earlier days. It seemed so solidly built that neither earthquakes nor sieges could endanger it. Even to-day, when one observes from that hillside a decadent city and neglected suburbs, the scene from the Mount of Olives is impressive. In the days of Pilate and Caiaphas it was imposing. The soul of every loyal Jew thrilled with enthusiasm as he viewed the splendid city, more than satisfying his fondest dreams, the magnificent temple so superb as to promise to be unrivalled upon its completion, rounding out a history which fostered his pride and fed his loyalty. The mere view of these things contributed to the maintenance of that expectancy which ever kept his blood pulsating at fever heat. It was indeed "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Could such a structure, thought they, with its sacred associations, its national yet permanent values, its acquired prestige, its obvious strength, be in danger of destruction? Could God permit such a frustration of His plans? The reply of Jesus was tragic in its directness. "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

Under the circumstances, the Twelve could not but wonder what He meant and when it would all take place. The four who were in closest relation with Him ventured to question Him on the subject. They had heard His predictions; they knew the feeling of the people, they had full confidence in Him, but needed His explanation.

His discourse furnishes one of the perpetual problems which confront the student of the life of Christ. The fullest report is given in the first Gospel, possibly because, after the custom of its writer, already noted, all

the teachings of Jesus bearing on this theme of the anticipated future were given expression at this point in His narrative. Mark's report includes, however, all of the ideas of that of Matthew. The disciples were warned by Jesus to expect a period abounding with difficulties and trials during which they were to be preaching the Gospel far and wide. The utmost resolution and patience would be incumbent upon them during these days of pioneering. Their experience would be a continuous struggle. Disappointment and disillusion would be theirs in abundance, but, sustained by the consciousness of their high responsibility and of divine support, they would rise superior to every hindrance and establish the kingdom. Until that end was measurably achieved they were to be indifferent to every apparent sign of the culmination of prophecy.

But a day of tribulation was to be anticipated which was unparalleled, a day of distress, of vengeance, of destruction, a day when all who had the power should flee away for refuge from the desolating scourge. This was to be, in part at least, a manifestation of the coming of the Son of man.

Had Jesus said no more His words would have been comparatively clear. Their fulfilment would have taken place at the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus some forty years later. The interval was truly one of bitter persecution but of increasing influence; the outcome a permanent establishment of Christianity as an independent religious communion. But He went on to declare, in the highly figurative language of apocryphal writers, a great disturbance of the heavens which should be the signal of the advent of the Son of man and the setting up of His kingdom. For this they were to watch and wait, all ready for instant service. In what sense this is to be understood no one can truly declare. It is either yet to be realized, or else is being progressively fulfilled as history is being made. To the one who reviews the achievements of nineteen centuries the latter view seems impressive.

The really urgent message of Jesus to His disciples related not to times or seasons but to tempers and attitudes. His servants were to be watchful, conscientious, ever ready for the coming of their Lord, like thoughtful and honest slaves, entrusted with property; like the prudent virgins invited to accompany the bride in the wedding procession; like the conscientious servant who used his opportunities to the utmost on behalf of his master.

The picture of the judgment scene conveys through its vivid figures the solemn declaration of the simple yet far-reaching basis on which it will be declared. Men will virtually do their own judging for all eternity by their deliberate attitude in this life toward their fellow-men. The social side of salvation was never more powerfully put.

When Jesus had ended these words His company doubtless wended their way back to Bethany, for we have no record of activity on the following day. One of their number did not accompany them. Judas, nerved to the point of betrayal, slipped away to the Sanhedrin and bargained to betray His Master, one of the puzzling deeds of history. Perhaps he, like Jesus, had become convinced of the hopeless hostility to Jesus of every one who seemed to count in Judaism.

No one counts but God. This is the sober lesson of all history.

Chapter 45.—The Institution of the Lord's Supper.

Mk. 14: 12-26; Jo. 13: 1-30.

So far as the Gospel records go they seem to assign no activity to the whole day following Tuesday. Jesus evidently spent that day in retirement, probably at Bethany, with His intimate disciples. That this unhurried, restful period was unused by Him seems incredible in view of the interests at stake and the absorption of them all in the satisfaction of these interests. It is not an improbable suggestion that the fourteenth to the seventeenth chapters of John's Gospel reflect the conversations of this day as well as of the following evening. At all events Jesus was done with His public ministry. Whatever the remaining interval of respite might afford was reserved for His disciples, who were in sore need of the eternal impressions which He now gave them.

The Gospels give us a singularly tender and beautiful account of the events which begin with the last journey to the city and end at Gethsemane. The founding of a simple commemorative custom, the performance of a never-forgotten act of symbolism, the pouring forth of deathless truth, the calm acceptance of a terrible and fully realized situation—these are the incidents of perhaps the most noteworthy evening in history, viewed in its outreach and influence as well as for itself.

Some time on Thursday the disciples raised the question of the place where they should all eat the Passover. They had no thought of breaking with Judaism; Jesus Himself seems to have been careful to observe all the usual customs of His nation. Both He and they were in good standing in such respects.

The reply of Jesus to their query and His subsequent procedure give the impression that He had planned carefully for this occasion. He not only wished to eat the Passover supper with the Twelve, but to be wholly free from interruption of any kind. Possibly He feared the premature treachery of Judas. At all events the ac-

counts in the synoptic Gospels agree in ascribing a degree of mystery to the preparations. Ten out of the twelve disciples could not have known the meeting-place until they were led to it at evening. Moreover, the two selected by Jesus for the duty of making arrangements were His most reliable disciples. The house was evidently that of a follower. It was enough that two of His immediate circle appeared and asked for the room in the name of "the Teacher."

The Passover supper was properly eaten together by the company. It always was and still continues to be a family festival. The declaration of Jesus that they would eat it together was a recognition of their intimacy and community of interest.

The two disciples had much to do. A lamb had to be killed and prepared at the temple between three and five o'clock in the afternoon; wine, herbs and unleavened cakes were bought; and a compound of fruit and vinegar prepared in which the cakes could be dipped. All in the meantime had bathed in ceremonial preparation for the sacred observance.

When they were all gathered in that quiet room, the heart of Jesus was very tender and loving, although sorely wounded. It is a sad commentary on life and human nature that the Twelve were able at that time of crisis to quarrel over precedence. The beautiful act of service on the part of the Master may have been needed as a quiet rebuke for their own forgetfulness and mistimed jealousy, yet it seems vastly more significant as an expression of that overflowing love which rejoices in simple service to its object. He and they were alone. He was about to draw them closer to Himself on an enduring basis of co-operating friendship. It was in His mind more to set an example than to point a rebuke. To show the joy of serviceableness and the dignity of self-forgetfulness was easy when their hearts were all responsive to the manifestation of enduring love.

That there should be among the Twelve even one who could not enter into this blessed fellowship was enough

to mar the perfect harmony of the gathering. Before expressing all that was in His heart or instituting the permanent symbol of their active friendship it was needful to get rid of the traitor. Judas had made his bargain; he had determined to play his false part; he was no longer by any shadow of right a member of the company or entitled to its hallowed experiences. Jesus therefore announced frankly the almost incredible fact that one of those in His presence was ready to betray Him. Each disciple was conscious of many a lapse in the past; each one knew how truly the Master had foreseen and lovingly forestalled his offenses; they could not but ask whether He could possibly mean any one of them, waiting for His fateful reply. It deepened the



The Last Supper. By Leonardo da Vinci.

This picture represents the consternation of the disciples on being told by Jesus that one of them should betray Him. Their names beginning on the left are: Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus, Andrew, Judas, Peter leaning behind Judas, John, James the brother of John leaning behind Thomas, Thomas, Philip, Matthew, Thaddæus, and Simon the Cananæan.

pathos of His declaration when He added that the one who could find it in his heart to do this base act was willing in his hypocrisy to share in that symbolic meal. Possibly Judas had not realized until that moment the real enormity of his offense; possibly he had lulled his conscience by the thought that he was forcing the Master to take the step toward a public acceptance of the national leadership that only a crisis would accomplish; at all events, the naked truth came clearly to his vision now. He knew that the words of Jesus were absolutely

true, and that they were meant for him. A reckless desperation took possession of him. He fled from that holy spot and went to his fate.

Out of the simple and sound fellowship of that hour Jesus created an eternal symbol of His undying love, a reminder of the spiritual covenant between Him and His followers. It was a simple institution but commemorative of the most noteworthy fact in the world—the sacrificial attitude toward men, and of the strongest conceivable tie,—the union of souls for the promotion of spiritual fellowship, the conquering of sin and the living of the truly Godlike life. The supper which He enjoined was the symbol of the future rather than of the past, a sacred memorial of Him who gave significance and substance to that unfolding future, a continuing assurance of His inexhaustible love and friendliness. To the eleven it was a happy, tender, unforgettable time of close companionship; to the world of disciples it has become the occasion of a continuing act of covenant renewal, emphasizing not responsibility or privilege alone but certitude and strength.

That any one had to be excluded from that circle has always seemed a tragedy; how equally saddening is the self-exclusion of many to this day, who might well belong to the brotherhood of believers.

Chapter 46,—The Farewell Discourse in the Upper Room.

Jo. 13:31—17:26.

Literature has preserved no record of the last words of a leader to his followers which approach in sublimity, tenderness and assurance these parting counsels of Jesus to those who had shared His fortunes for the crowded years of His ministry. Moreover, by their very nature these words have become and will ever remain the assurance of unmeasurable comfort and stimulus to successive generations of loyal disciples.

The quietness and self-possession of Jesus should not

blind us to the depth and power of the emotion which was stirring His soul. Only as we realize it can we justly value His ministry to them and to the world of believers that sacred night. Were there a real shrine for Christian adoration and adornment, it would not be in fulness of significance the manger at Bethlehem, not



The Upper Chamber.

From a photograph.

even the garden of Gethsemane, possibly not even the hill of Calvary or the tomb of Joseph, but rather this upper room, where words were said which summed up the whole personality and objective of Jesus. It was His last opportunity to enable the Eleven to see with His eyes of far-reaching vision, to be aggressive with His God-anchored confidence, to thrill with a constant sense of joyful compan-

ionship, never to be broken, and to deliberately plan the evangelization of the world.

Certain dominating ideas He emphasized in varied ways—an approaching separation, inevitable and not to be regretted, since it would lead to a closer and more permanent union between Him and them; the power that would be theirs in proportion as they realized this intimate fellowship; its basis in an absolute confidence in Jesus as the human expression of the character and will of God, the Father; the triumphant, satisfying peacefulness of spirit which should be their normal habit of mind amid any anxieties which should arise; the expectation of overcoming hindrances which they might encourage through the practice of prayer; the continuation of His helpful contact with them through the Helper who was to be; their education, their sustaining,

their supplementing by this divine Helper; the need of a deep and enduring love which could meet every test, such a love as He was manifesting for them; and the fine friendship which He had ever sought to show for them and to develop in their hearts.

These words, so precious, so full of meaning, so compact, seem to represent the teachings of a period rather than the conversation of an evening. It is difficult not to conclude that on this particular evening Jesus concluded and reaffirmed the thought of the days of close companionship that had preceded. However, we have truly in these imperishable sayings the very heart of the Gospel. It was the unreserved outpouring of the expression of the innermost consciousness of Jesus.

As a whole it was an evening to uplift and cheer. Jesus faced His shameful death but His first thought was likewise of the glorification which would result. We can imagine in some slight degree the awakening of His soul to the great fact that the time of self-repression and obedience and sacrifice was almost over, that the day of His recognition and exaltation was at hand, that there would soon be a Peter declaring in public, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." He set Himself before the Eleven as a bestower of power upon the faithful and persistent disciple, as the complete and perfect revelation of the Father and very God Himself.

In unforgettable terms Jesus clinched the relationship of unreserved friendliness which had grown up between Him and them. He and they were as truly one in spirit as the branches and the vine-stock were one in fruit-forming vitality. They loved to call Him their Master, but He had developed a deeper and stronger bond of association. He had treated them as friends, sharing with them the deepest realities of His spiritual life (Jo. 15:15). In the future to which they all were looking they were to cherish among themselves this same spirit of generous, uncalculating friendliness, and

to join with Him in forwarding the progress of the kingdom of God.

He must needs disappear from their circle, but only that their temporary and intermittent intercourse should be exchanged for an abiding, more precious, persistent and fruitful relationship.

In His place would come the Holy Spirit,—Helper,—God's permanent manifestation of Himself in human experience, whose share in the direction and influence of their personal religious life would be real and constant, for the fuller grasping of essential truth, for the keener realization of the facts which made the world's redemption a necessity, for the adequate exhibition of Jesus to the world as Christ and Lord, for the steady enlightenment of the great body of believers.

To those who were able to lay hold of such ideas Jesus left a great legacy of peace (Jo. 14:27; 16:33). Those who could enter into victorious fellowship with Him had nothing to fear, no reason even for continued anxiety; they were His.

It was very fitting that our Lord should close this sacred assemblage with a consecrating prayer. The ideas which dominate it are the thoughts which quickened His life and made sacred their fellowship. He asked for strength to properly conclude the life which had exhibited the Father in His fulness unto men, that He might normally resume His heavenly glory. He then petitioned for those who had been entrusted to Him by God, who had yet a work to do in the world, whom He would bring close to God in an abiding and joyous relationship. He prayed that they might be able to stand apart from the evil spirit of selfishness which ruins the worldly temperament, and that they might deliberately undertake this separateness as a duty. Then with the thought of the coming body of believers He prayed for their mutual love and exhibition of a spirit of heavenly-mindedness, until their love should indeed be as deep, as constant, as forceful, as irresistible as the love of God Himself for Jesus, His Son.

That Jesus has made us His real friends, that He summons us to continued companionship and to a co-operation in the glorious work of world redemption, that we are not called on to fight unaided, and that our every-day characteristics may indeed become like those of God are wonderful thoughts. What other revealer of God in all the ages ever dreamed of them or gave them expression?

Chapter 47.—At the Garden of Gethsemane.

Mt. 26:36-56.

There are some who place the conversation of Mt. 26:31-35 after the close of the gathering in the upper room, while the little group was on its way out of the city. The mind of Jesus seemed to dwell upon the sad fact that in His time of agony and trial He would be virtually alone. The test would be too severe for even such loyalty as theirs. It would not be a real desertion, merely a temporary loss of courage, which would cause them to humbly realize their weakness and gather new strength because of that realization.

For Simon Peter the bitter consciousness of a threefold denial of his Lord would be so effective for the steadying of his loyalty and the strengthening of his purpose that in coming days he would become the mainstay of his brethren. To none of them was Jesus' dec-



View in the Garden of Gethsemane.

From a photograph.

laration that He would go before them to Galilee significant at the time; but it revealed His confidence that their loyalty would bend but never be broken.

They soon came, just outside the walls, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, to a garden where Jesus loved to rest. It was so common a resort for them all that Judas felt entirely sure that Jesus could be found there. At the entrance to this garden or orchard of olive trees Jesus left eight of the disciples, taking Peter, James and John with Him. In such a crisis as the one before Him only His most confidential associates could be of moral help. With the pathetic yearning of a loyal, trustful, helpful nature Jesus sought for friendly support in this time of trial from those who knew Him best. But He had to win His victory unaided. They could not grasp His need.

Going with them to the secluded portions of the garden where He would be unobserved, He told them of the weight of sorrow and dread, almost worse than death itself, which was on His heart, and appealed to them for their active sympathy and companionship. It was His hour; the cup was full to the brim.



Old Olive Tree in Gethsemane.

They saw the Master walk a little distance away and then prostrate Himself in prayer. In the quiet of that midnight hour they heard His appealing words to the Father that if possible the cup might not be His to drain, and then, perhaps after a long interval of agonizing petition, the expression of heroic consecration,

“Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” The quiet of the night and the lateness of the hour made them drowsy and, before they realized it, they were asleep. So Jesus found them when He finished His first vigil. He expressed keen disappointment that they were not alive to the seriousness of the crisis which was at hand. It was

as vital for them as for Him. Peter, the confident, had failed at this his first test after boasting of what he would do. Both he and they needed to realize the necessity of unwearying vigilance and persistent prayerfulness, if they were to become able to meet and overcome the testings that were before them. Great resolves would not count in the face of cowardice or forgetfulness.

A second time Jesus went away and prayed for strength and persistency in His hour of trial. Again He returned and found them sleeping. They were not alive to the immediateness of the peril of which He had spoken. Amid their accustomed surroundings, in familiar intercourse with their beloved Leader, of whose power they had had so many proofs, how could they make His humiliation and death a reality? They felt that as before, when He had spoken of these things, they simply could not take place.

Coming to the three for the third time, He told them that the time of waiting was over. Those who were seeking Him were at the very gates of the garden. The glare of torches, the clank of armed men marching, the murmur of voices, proclaimed the coming of a throng. Judas was at their head. When he left the supper room, he had doubtless hurried away to the priests, who organized a party for the apprehension of Jesus. When they did not find Him at the house where the supper had taken place, it was easy for Judas to surmise where He would be found and to lead the band to Gethsemane.

The mind of Judas will ever be an enigma to the loyal Christian. His place even among the Twelve occasions constant query. He must have been originally a man of real promise in every way. He developed business ability, so that he and not Matthew became the treasurer and almoner of the group. He must have been one who burned with zeal in those early days in Galilee. Some have thought to excuse his disloyalty by representing his action as intended to force Jesus to pursue the policy which Judas regarded as necessary and

right. He was certainly a man who stood zealously for the Judaism of the day and could not sympathize with the departures of Jesus. Judas was not, like the others, of a teachable nature. In his narrow-minded zeal he must have set his judgment above that of his Master, but we cannot explain away his treachery by thus accounting for its beginnings. That he bargained for the betrayal of Jesus is a fatal blot upon his character. The most charitable view of his action regards it as that of one beside himself with vexation at the folly of his leader.

It was a curious company that came with Judas to take Jesus into custody. The officer in command was a Roman soldier with others from the squad which was ever on duty at the temple. With them were temple police and priests. A strong band, indeed, for securing one unarmed man! But Jesus had plenty of supporters and defenders, whose swords would have been unsheathed, had they known of His plight. The Sanhedrin was well aware of this contingency and guarded against it.

Judas was cunning and resourceful. He arranged as the sign which the soldiers should recognize the very salutation of friendship which Jesus and His disciples were wont to use. Thus unobtrusively he did his promised service. With hasty impulse Peter struck one hearty blow in defense of the Master, but Jesus quieted him with a disapproving word.

The narrative of the fourth Gospel has inherent truth. The soldiers were looking for a dangerous agitator. When Jesus with calm dignity announced Himself to be the one they sought they were overwhelmed and dismayed. He was the very picture of nobleness and sincerity, in fullest self-command. With impressiveness He yielded Himself to the band. This was too much for the disciples; they fled for their lives in despair.

This narrative emphasizes the place of prayer in the life of Jesus. By it He passed through the crisis, but even then He would only use His power in prayer for reasonable ends.

Chapter 48.—The Trial and Condemnation of Jesus.

Mt. 26:57—27:31.

The accounts which have been preserved in the Gospels of the rapid series of events concluding with the formal condemnation of Jesus to death by crucifixion raise many puzzling questions to the harmonist, but agree in certain outstanding representations. They all lay stress upon the haste with which Jesus was brought to trial, the unscrupulousness of His foes, their vengeful and violent attitude toward Him and His complete self-mastery. The tables were turned in every instance. Jesus was the real judge; instinctively priests and governor alike admitted it. The victory of the hierarchy was a barren one, quite unsatisfying to them. The condemnation of the Roman governor was by his own admission a concession to the clamor of the mob, unwarranted by any recognizable standard of legal procedure. The only way of accomplishing the cruel deed on which the leaders had set their hearts was by overriding their own canons of law or even of natural justice.

Jesus was hurried away from the garden by His captors to those who had instigated His arrest and were eagerly waiting the outcome. The fourth Gospel declares that He was first taken to Annas, the true leader of Jewish opinion and probable director of operations, a priest, who though deposed from the high-priesthood, retained its actual powers through the successive appointment of his relatives. Not improbably his house and that of Caiaphas, the high priest *de jure*, were the same.

There was from the Sanhedrin's point of view every reason for haste in dealing with Jesus. They feared a rallying of His friends and were therefore unwilling to put Him in custody during the feast days. But long-observed custom forbade an execution during them. Hence the greatest speed was necessary in securing His death or at least His imprisonment by the Romans before they began.

Nothing seems more curious than the mingling of the legal and unjustifiable in the Jewish trial of Jesus. The council did not scruple to meet at an unusual hour nor to make use of witnesses who were wholly inept. On the other hand, they were not willing to condemn Jesus on the testimony of one witness nor did any one deliberately attempt to supply the missing evidence.



So-called House of Caiaphas.

Evidently they were determined to bring about a vote of condemnation, but to do it under the forms of law.

The adjuration of the high priest was not illegal, yet it was unfair. Jesus need not have answered it, but He was not one to keep silence when questioned contemptuously regarding His most sacred conviction. His declaration regarding His Messianic triumph soon to be accomplished really implied that before long they would be at the bar of judgment, not He.

This infuriated and perhaps actually shocked the members of the Sanhedrin. They themselves became the legal witnesses and united in pronouncing the sentence of condemnation. It may be questioned whether the declaration by itself would have seemed blasphemous, had its meaning not been made clear by the things which Jesus had said and done before. He not only declared Himself to be the Messiah, but likewise that His idea of the Messiah and His work was like that of God.

Other trials were going on in the open court that night. Peter and John were being tested. Peter had no thought of denying his Lord. He spoke with the sud-

den impulse to self-preservation so natural to every one. It was the sorrowful yet tender look of the Master that went to the really loyal heart of Peter and he rushed away from those searching, reproachful eyes. John apparently remained openly loyal to Jesus although he could do nothing for Him except to give Him the comfort of his loving presence.

While Jesus was being detained until He could be brought before the procurator the servants of the palace were permitted to do with Him as they would. Blind-folding Him they amused themselves by striking Him in the face and asking Him to indicate His assailant. Even if the Sanhedrists took no part in the outrage, they rejoiced in every new humiliation.

At a very early hour Jesus was led away to the palace of Herod. Into it the leaders would not go, but sent Jesus by the hand of some agent into the presence of Pilate, the procurator. They had condemned Him on the charge of blasphemy; they altered the charge before Pilate to one of high treason. This new charge clearly revealed their determination to put Him to death at whatever cost of perjury or baseness. Only a few days before, in the presence of some of them, Jesus had upheld the right of Cæsar to demand tribute. Had the charge been true, Jesus would have been the idol of the Jewish people. Pilate gave it little credit, apparently, yet he could not wholly ignore a charge so serious. He prepared at once to examine into the matter.

What an unveiling of genuine character there was that morning! Each personality before the calm gaze of Jesus stood forth in its reality. Peter realized his disloyalty, Judas the black infamy of his deed. The Pharisees and priests gave open expression to their passionate hatred of the quiet, self-contained prisoner whom they could fether but never crush. Pilate, the practical man of the world, astute in judgment, swift to catch the insincerity of their accusations, was still a man of expedients, a trimmer, one who valued his own ease and welfare beyond any desire to do justice. He saw clearly

what was his proper decision, but he proposed to do what was best for himself. Of Herod even less can be said. The contempt of Jesus for that wholly corrupt ruler was beyond words.

The trials before Pilate were really a farce. The Jewish rulers knew their man and that they could coerce him into condemning Jesus. He deluded himself for a while by the thought that he could execute his own will, but he dared not use decisive measures. We are almost led to pity his indecision, at one time offering to compromise by scourging Jesus severely and letting Him go, at another trying to argue with the mob which confronted him, and finally proposing to release Jesus as a Passover prisoner. He was outgeneraled and humiliated by the triumphant Sanhedrists, who compelled him by threats which he dared not disregard to pronounce the desired sentence.

The trial of Jesus was a travesty on justice. Three times Pilate declared Him innocent. He went to His death without a stain. His enemies were humiliated; their vindictiveness only served to set forth more clearly His dignity and purity and innocence.

Human selfishness crucified Jesus and is crucifying Him afresh to-day. Whoever seeks to order his religious life after standards which are his own and yet claims to be a disciple of Jesus is perilously near the sin of Judas and the hierarchy.

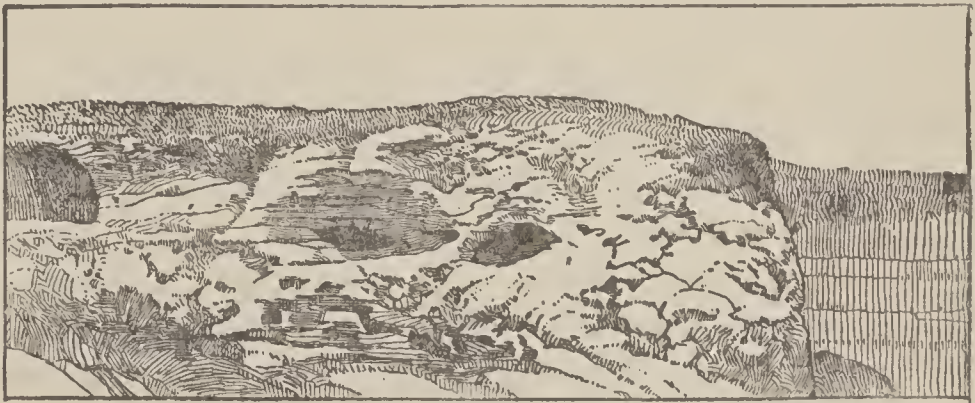
Chapter 49.—The Crucifixion of Jesus.

Mt. 27: 32-66.

It has often been noted that the real cause of the intense suffering of Jesus on the cross was not the mere physical agony due to the wounds in His hands and feet and to the suspension of His body from these lacerated limbs. Men often suffered thus for days before death released them. Jesus died in a few hours. He was racked by an agony beyond the reach of words. It was not the shameful degradation of the cross that moved Him thus, for He well knew that out of the shame would come His glorification. Never was He so clearly a King of men as when He hung upon the cross. We can only understand His speedy death by recalling the repeated and accumulated torture He had suffered since the scene at Gethsemane. Betrayed, deserted, insulted, execrated, attacked, scourged in the cruellest fashion,—enough of itself to lower the vitality of a man—He had continuously suffered the most intense agony of body and spirit. How great a burden rested on His soul, placed there by His passionate love for men and vivid realization of their heedlessness, their wastage, their ungodliness, only He could know. But we can faintly appreciate the effect of the rapid succession of experiences, each testing His endurance and self-control to its utmost. Within the space of a day Jesus crowded the anguish of a lingering martyrdom. No wonder He could not endure the long and bitter agony of the cross.

For the very reason that Jesus by His death transformed the cross from a symbol of shame and ignominy to a token of glorious triumph, and because we do not see with our eyes its dreadful realities, it is not possible for us to fully realize the horror with which a death by crucifixion was contemplated by the average Jew. “Enduring the cross, despising the shame,” meant something more to the reader of the days of Paul than a mere willingness to suffer. That Jesus died on the cross was

a real "stumbling-block" to the Jew, a sufficient indication to the average enlightened Jew that Jesus was not the Messiah He claimed to be. Crucifixion was a death which no Roman citizen could suffer; it was reserved for slaves or criminals, for those who were not regarded as entitled to any consideration. It was this fact that gave the sting of deadly insult to Pilate's inscription over the head of Jesus. The procurator saw, if the priesthood



The Hill Called Calvary.

Calvary, or Golgotha, "the place of a skull" (Mt. 27:33), was outside the city wall (Heb. 13:12), not far away (Jo. 19:20), and apparently near a public highway (Mt. 27:39). Its exact location is much disputed. Ancient tradition connects it with the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre (see cut on page 193), but the probability that this place was then as now inside the wall renders this doubtful. Of late years the so-called New Calvary, just north of the city, near the Damascus road, which from one point of view has a curious resemblance to a skull, has been accepted by many as the true site.

did not, the degradation which they had invited for themselves. It is possible that Pilate took advantage of the presence in his dungeons of two robbers awaiting execution to emphasize the insult. In any case it was marked.

As the procession headed by the grim group of soldiers guarding the victims with their crosses wound up the hill outside the wall of the city, Jesus gave one more evidence of His constant thoughtfulness. When the women, whose intuitions then as now led them to place their sympathy more unerringly than did their fathers and sons, lamented His cruel fate, He bade them weep rather for themselves and for their beloved country, going to swift ruin, than for Him, so soon to be glorified.

That same habit of carefulness for others which distinguished His whole life expressed itself in His prayer for the rude soldiers who nailed Him to the cross; in His placing His mother in the care of His nearest friend; in His response to the brigand who hung near Him; in His last word as reported in the fourth Gospel (19:30). The world of mankind was ever on His heart.

With supreme courage Jesus met the crisis. He refused the stupefying draught given to the poor victims before their crucifixion. No word of reproach for His enemies passed His lips, but only gracious and kindly expressions. Only in the last extremity of His pain and weakness did He seem to momentarily falter. If His cry to God in the words of the Psalmist was indeed an expression of His real feeling, it was followed by a deep and strong conviction of God's abiding presence. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," was the confident utterance of His inmost self.

Over against the mockery of the stragglers and the priests stands in welcome relief the devotion of the disciples. They had recovered from their panic and with the group of faithful women were watching the dreadful scene with saddened countenances. This sudden death in this shameful manner of their beloved Leader seemed the death blow to all their ardent hopes. Yet their love for Jesus was so sincere that they watched their opportunity to render to Him the last services of tender respect and braved the danger of the proximity to Him.

Even upon the centurion, hardened to such scenes, the dying Saviour made a deep impression. Never had he known one who met his death in such fashion. "Truly," said he, in his half-heathen mingling of divine and human ideas, "this was a son of God," by which he must have meant "a godlike sort of man."

In glorious fact the death of Jesus "replaced the evil associations of the cross by ideas of inexhaustible beauty and significance." His death was so full of dig-

nity that it drove out the thought of shame. The very ones who saw the cross on Golgotha with horror-stricken eyes were heard not long after to rejoice over it. It was the symbol of sacrifice but likewise that of triumph and glory. Through His voluntary death upon the cross Jesus forever made it the symbol of noble, deliberate, worthy self-sacrifice, before which evil loses its power.

All this was hidden from the hearts of the faithful few that afternoon when to the surprise of all Jesus gave up His life. They only wished to save His sacred



Entrance to a Tomb near the New Calvary.

From a photograph.

This cut shows the entrance to a rock-cut tomb in a garden near the New Calvary, with a track for a rolling stone. This tomb has a receptacle for one body, and many suppose it be the tomb of Jesus.

been used. Here without the attention usually given at such a time, for it was very late, but swathed in clean linen wrappings, the body of Jesus was placed, until the Sabbath should have passed. Nothing more could be done that day, so with sad and hopeless hearts the disciples went away.

The cross has a many-sided significance for the disciples of Jesus to-day. More than any other experience it reveals His nobleness, His fortitude, His fixed habit of thinking of others, His absolute confidence in God. More than any other it exhibits the true nature of that sinfulness which demanded such a sacrifice. Better than any other it sets forth the real glory

form from further ill-treatment or from the usual exposure for days or weeks by taking it away at once and laying it in a tomb. Fortunately there were men of influence who shared this wish and were able to secure from the procurator an order for the body. Reverently and tenderly it was taken down and borne away to the tomb not far away which had never

of heavenly-minded self-sacrifice. Jesus was never so deeply impressed upon the world as by His voluntary exaltation on the cross. Its humiliation became a badge of honor. The way of the cross He bequeathed to His disciples as the way of true service.

Chapter 50.—The Risen Christ.

Mt. 28:1-15; Lu. 24:13-43; Jo. ch. 20.

By every rule of history the work of Jesus among men should have ended at the cross. He was an apparently discredited man, whose pretensions were clearly revealed as unfounded, whose plans had come to naught. His friends might regard Him as a hero; some might believe Him to have been a martyr; but who could think of Him as triumphant in view of His death? His disciples, during the Sabbath that began as He was laid to rest in the new tomb, were sick at heart, crushed with grief and disappointment and filled with foreboding. To their gracious and beloved Leader they were not disposed to be unfaithful; but He had become a tender memory. It would seem that their first thought was that the future would have to be lived apart from Him.

The narratives of the resurrection imply the apathetic attitude of those who had been hitherto devoted to Jesus. They were not, on that Sunday morning, the first day of the week, looking for something to happen. The women were intent upon giving proper care to the body of their Master, but the disciples as a body were dazed and disheartened. They gathered at some rendezvous, known even to the women, where they were reasonably safe from molestation, that they might lay plans for the future. Here, probably, they were, but without any definite outlook, at daybreak following the Sabbath.

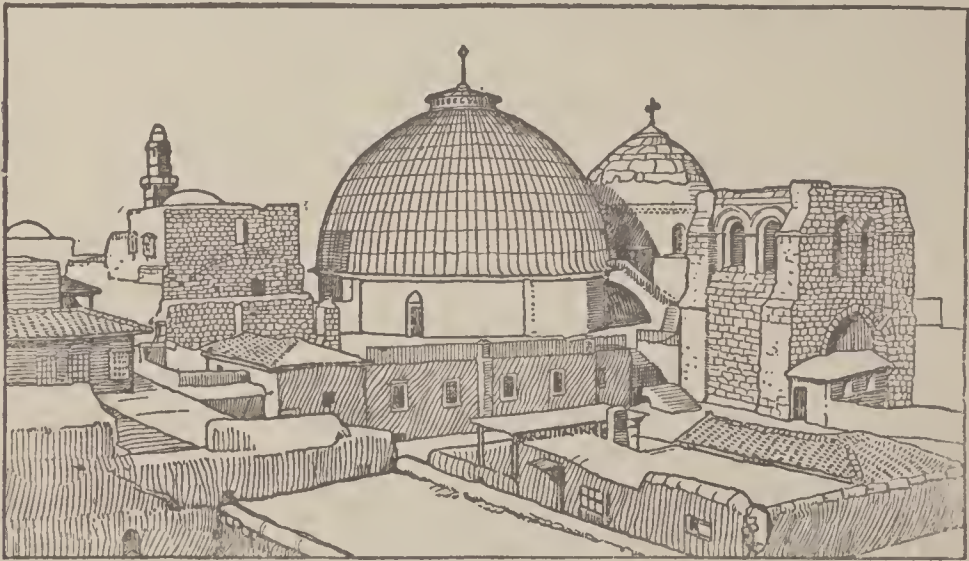
Including the summary by Paul in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians there are five passages which

contribute to the story of the resurrection. These narratives are fairly independent and raise many curious questions, for the double reason that they observe a curious but worthy reticence and lay stress upon the personal impressions of the resurrection rather than its physical phenomena.

The reticence of the Gospels as compared with the freedom of an apocryphal writing, such as the acts of Pilate, is noteworthy. The latter plainly aims to satisfy curiosity; the former aim to set forth a spiritual experience. It is not unnatural for believers to wish for accurate information regarding the method and warrant of the actual victory of Jesus over death; it would be unworthy of a Gospel to describe them, even were it possible.

The different narratives have interesting differences. The account by Paul merely summarizes the appearances of Jesus in succession. He does not describe them in detail, nor give them at first hand. The account in Mark's Gospel dwells upon the early visit of the women to the tomb, their astonishment at finding it open, the message to the disciples and Peter, and their absolute confusion of mind. That of the first Gospel is much more detailed. We note that it declares that the women were not so affected by what they heard as to be unable to hasten to bring the disciples the glad tidings. It also declares that Jesus showed Himself to the women as they were on their way. Luke's Gospel indicates the incredulity of the disciples when they heard the women's words. According to the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene was the informant of the two closest disciples, hurrying to the house where they were staying (Jo. 20:1-10). On hearing the exciting news they ran together to the tomb. They found it empty, yet the position and appearance of the grave-clothes precluded a theory of violence and seemed to suggest at once the glorious fact that there had been a resurrection. Mary, having perhaps started away from the tomb to tell these two and not, therefore, having been with the other

women who met Jesus in the way, returned to the tomb alone. Her heart was crushed with grief, for the death of Jesus was a deep personal sorrow to her. Through her blinding tears she saw one whom she took to be the gardener, and appealed to him to make known to her what had been done with the beloved body. Jesus needed but to speak a word to have her recognize Him and fall at His feet in adoration.



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

From a photograph.

The smaller dome covers the site of the church built by Constantine in the fourth century; the larger one covers the traditional Holy Sepulchre itself; the Gothic front was built by the Crusaders.

The story of the resurrection would be very incomplete if lacking the beautiful story of the walk to Emmaus that afternoon, and the accounts of His appearance to the disciple group at Jerusalem that evening. As an effective literary product the story of the journey of the two disciples is worthy of comment. It is one of the finest passages in a beautiful Gospel. The wondering, saddened disciples, their naive expression of their former hopes and present helplessness, their joy in the conversation about their beloved Master, their hospitality, the sudden lifting of the veil which had blinded their eyes by the use of the familiar custom, the eagerness with which they retraced their steps—

these particulars read like a blessed and joyful experience. But it did not stop there. While they were relating to the others these events, the Master Himself was with them, gladdening their hearts and assuring their trembling faith. Even Thomas, the sturdy doubter, became at last convinced that his Lord had indeed arisen from the dead.

Whoever attempts to explain the resurrection gives himself an impossible task. In the nature of the case it was a mystery and always will remain so. Our principal evidence regarding it is the undoubted fact that its comprehension made a sudden, revolutionary yet permanent change in the disciple group. They who a few hours before had been prostrated became full of courage. Their apathy gave place to insight and aggressiveness. Once more they could begin to make plans as a united band with a future to work out. Their confidence in Jesus sprang up afresh and became the basis of an enduring, sacrificial faith.

To them His resurrection was the first step toward the speedy coming of the kingdom of God. They anticipated it within that generation and urged Him to indicate the exact date of its fruition. But it also assured His permanent and active relationship to them. No wonder they were filled with joy and hopefulness.

The resurrection has a message no less inspiring for the Christian of to-day. It is the basis of our confidence that Jesus is our living Lord, that we can live near to Him, can commune with Him in prayer, and receive from Him influences as from a powerful and beloved friend. This was made possible by His resurrection into the new and higher life of the Spirit, which may be ours too, because it became His.

Chapter 51.—The Last Instructions.

Mt. 28 : 16-20 ; Lu. 24 : 44-53 ; Jo. ch. 21.

Such a ministry as that of Jesus could scarcely have closed even with the kindling of the resurrection hope in the hearts of His followers. It needed to be followed up, illustrated, enforced by actual contact with His inspiring personality in order that it be more than a wonderful experience and an awe-inspiring memory, and become instead a genuine source of vital power. The period which ensued between the appearance of Jesus after His burial and His final departure had this signifi-



Church of the Ascension, on Mount Olivet.

From a photograph.

cance. It was a time of quiet readjustment, of growing spiritual conviction, of kindling enthusiasm, of unceasing constructive thinking. All the old puzzles of faith were now clear. A thousand perplexities had begun to resolve themselves into encouragements. Above all the disciples had an indubitable reason for a growing conviction that they were not creatures of the day, subject to its uncertainties, but spiritual beings born unto eternal life.

That all this, however, took a little time was evidenced by the first impulse of the disciples. They had returned to Galilee but had had no vision there as yet of their Master. They were awaiting the appearance which had been promised. They hardly knew what to do. In those days of enforced waiting by the well-known shore the old instinct for familiar work revived and, led by Peter, six of them went fishing. While at that homely but practical labor, so natural to them, the looked-for appearance came in the most familiar fashion. Jesus was made known to them because in following His instructions instead of their own devices they drew in boat loads of fish. It was a beautiful way of introducing Himself, a little acted parable of life.

We can readily imagine the thoughts which surged through Peter's heart, impulsive, loving, great-souled Peter! Without hesitation he leaped into the sea the quicker to join his Lord. Just as promptly he hastened in obedience to His direction to drag ashore the great net full of fishes. How he wished that by some great deed he could win back the love and trust of his beloved Master!

Jesus had him in mind. He had not once forgotten His brave and generous follower. Peter had already been forgiven, but he had been led, perhaps unwittingly, to deny Him thrice, so Jesus drew him gently into a threefold utterance of his love. The repeated question was a kind of challenge to Peter to test himself most carefully before venturing to boast again. It was a bitter lesson, but concluded with a reassuring charge. He was once more publicly given apostolic responsibility, never again to dishonor it.

It is interesting to note what Jesus did to foster the growing earnestness and courage of the disciples. With an occasional word which seemed to look forward He still in the main sustained a friendly intercourse. It was as if the great thing for them was a vision of the truth that life is mainly a spiritual not a material reality. He wished to convince them that He was truly

within their ken although they knew that He was no longer one of them. He meant to make His presence forever intensely real.

The course of events during the days that followed we cannot declare. Did He, as on the way to Emmaus, lay the foundation through the earnest and thorough discussion of their interpretations of Scripture for enabling them to readjust their points of view and re-establish their convictions in accordance with the glad assurances of His spiritual Messiahship? So Lu. 24: 44, 45, would, perhaps, imply. Did He lead them again amid the familiar scenes, made sacred to them by the recollection of many a pregnant utterance, now understood in its fulness of meaning? Did they discuss with Him the active future, which they were so soon to inaugurate? Possibly not, yet these weeks were a time of transformation and of real enlightenment. At its end they were a very different set of men.

His closing message was a glorious appeal not alone to them but to every earnest, loyal follower of His for all time.

It recognized (Lu. 24:48) the special importance of the fact that they could speak at first hand. There was a force in their testimony which was possible to no others. Men listen to-day with open ears to the real experiences of those who have been with Jesus and can testify that He is their eternal Friend and Saviour. The Christian worker who can repeat only what he has heard but never has had a vision of the Lord, has no real message to proclaim.

As witnesses they had (Lu. 24:47) a far-reaching duty. It was to declare the mission of Jesus throughout the broad world beginning at Jerusalem. The holy city of Judaism was the right starting-point. If they were faithful there, they would be everywhere. He who could face a Jewish mob would never flinch at the call of duty elsewhere. The whole world was their parish, not Israel alone, but they were to begin with their own kinsmen and friends. This was as hard for them as it

is for us. They would have gladly kept quiet until well away.

But in this work they did not stand alone. Jesus was now triumphant. He would be their Leader. Relying upon Him they had no reason for hesitancy or dismay or delay, for He was supreme, the Lord of all, "in whom all things consist." Their one duty was to go ahead, persistently, patiently, hopefully, with their work.

They were to "disciple all nations." What a noble task for men who had learned in the presence of such a Master what disciple meant! It was no meaningless consecration through a formula, but an introduction to the Christlike type of life, not alone as an ideal but as an activity. A great commission this was, one not satisfied by the wonderful work done during those first Christian generations, but transmitted to each generation as a solemn obligation which it dare not neglect. In proportion as Christendom realizes the full meaning of Christ-likeness, in that degree it is bound to propagate it abroad.

But they were to tarry at Jerusalem until clothed with heavenly power. How wise a restriction upon those and all other disciples! The one really essential personal gift in those who would speak for God is that sense of power which accompanies the consciousness of His abiding presence. Without this conviction there is no reality in the message; with it the words are words of life.

Chapter 52.—The Man Christ Jesus : A General Review.

The last week in the active life of Jesus hardly needs reviewing. Its incidents are so connected, its personalities so vivid that they are quite unforgettable. But one personality dominates all others. His fortunes are truly the key to the whole record. All else is of trifling importance.

A similar conclusion is reached by the student of that short period of the history of the world, during which Jesus of Nazareth lived His active life of holy goodness. Little that happened really counted save those things which centered around Him. The haughty ruler at Rome would have crucified the maker of such a treasonable saying; his satellites and representatives in Syria and Palestine or the far East might have laughed the idea to scorn, but it would have been entirely true, and all broad-minded historians of to-day admit it. Rome's ambitions and capacities served chiefly to prepare the way of the Cross; Greek culture and Jewish hostility were alike useful in insuring Christianity a hearing before the whole world. The religion which Jesus formulated as the way of life, along which He had furnished an example, and the habit of witnessing to the value of this spiritual life, which He urged upon all His disciples, became irresistible. But the secret of Christianity's success lay not so much in the preparation for it, so providentially made, nor in the teachings regarding things spiritual in which He summed up so simply and yet so perfectly the basis, the motives, the methods and the right attitude of the truly religious soul. It lay in the wonderful personality of Jesus, at once attracting, educating, inspiring and refining all minds with which He had contact. He gloriously embodied the spiritual ideas on which He loved to dwell. He was religion itself, for in truly following Him, men served God.

We do not honor Jesus, however, by merely declaring that He led men to God. He was more than good, more than obedient; He was eminently sane and wise. Com-

pared with other religious leaders He easily stands pre-eminent. John the Baptist He declared to be a true representative of the best type of Jewish life and thought, but John the Baptist had the narrow vision of the ascetic and the recluse, a strong, upright, earnest personality but no permanent leader of humanity. The Jewish rabbi, Hillel, has often been compared with Jesus. He was certainly an enlightened and liberal Jew, sober of judgment, considerate, broad-minded, but he set no value upon men and women as such. He had the reserve of his class and to some extent its machine-like conception of religion.

Jesus permitted neither exclusiveness nor asceticism to temper His view of the duty of good men in this world. He represented rather the privilege of universal service, each person performing gladly and freely his part for the common good, helping to make the world a fitting abode for Godlike people. This He could do because, like no other one who ever lived, Jesus entered completely into actual life, not merely sympathizing with those in difficult conditions of life, but sharing in the conditions themselves, and exhibiting the true way of overcoming or enduring them.

Like no other religious teacher Jesus knew God and could make Him real to men. He was not the first one to call Him Father; but He was practically the first one who gave the relationship a living significance. The tendency of Judaism had been to emphasize the sovereignty of God. His awful holiness only served to remove Him from the proximity of sinful human kind. He was a judge, a righteous ruler, a standard of perfection, but not a lovable personality, thoughtful for the individual man. But Jesus revolutionized men's ideas regarding God. He talked with Him in complete sympathy. He dwelt upon His love and goodness. He encouraged confidence in His fatherly care for all men. He enforced His claim to a true filial obedience, which rejoices in the trusts imposed and responds with eagerness.

But Jesus also knew all of the secrets of the human heart. He was unerring in His judgment of men, yet believed in them. He was an optimist, because He could see more clearly than most men the good that hides away from sight in the worst of men. His friendliness melted opposition that was not vicious and kindled zeal that was dormant. Companionship with Him gave every man a vision of his best self, for Jesus was a continual embodiment of human ideals. He exhibited the fullest and most normal development of which the human body or mind is capable, and hence the most attractive personality. His one comprehensive principle regarding man was that he can be like God and hence should become Godlike.

No less well than God or man did He know the world and its true character. He sometimes used the word figuratively to express a state of hostility to God, but usually the world was for Him the scene of God's glorious work for men. It was His tool, to be made use of; not an opponent of which to stand in fear.

Jesus was ever defining the relationship of these various factors in the universe of spirit: God, man, and the universe. God was supreme in His leadership; man God's willing and unselfish instrument for service, making the world a paradise indeed. Like the prophets of old He was ever pleading for an earnest and devoted attention to the highest things. His greater effectiveness becomes apparent when we compare any prophetic utterance with the Sermon on the Mount.

Best of all He knew Himself as one commissioned to reveal God to men in all His perfection. Prophets had struggled to express in broader and clearer ways their growing conception of God in His working relationship to the world. Jesus knew that He alone perfectly understood all the factors in this problem and could embody them in His own personality. He had a mission, the greatest one conceivable. He left mankind to deliberately determine whether He fulfilled it.

The questions which the earnest student of His life

should ask are such as these: Did Jesus through His acts and words enable men to get permanently closer to God? Did He reveal a larger range of human possibilities as well as a nobler normal life? Did He define human life in such a way as to give every experience its place in the fostering of a Godlike life, making the world our own? Did He succeed in naturalizing the spiritual world and in giving it its true supremacy over the natural? Did He establish all history, all life, all thought, all expectancy in its right relations? Then the long-time controversies regarding His divinity or humanity no longer demand discussion by the one who can truthfully reply in the affirmative, for the substance of all that His divinity demands will have been conceded.

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